

THE FINANCES OF JAMES VI.

1567-1603.

By

R. S. Brydon, M. A.

Thesis presented for the Degree of Ph. D.

---

Degree conferred, 22<sup>nd</sup> July. 1925.



**BEST COPY  
AVAILABLE**

**Variable print  
quality**

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH THESIS

Author (surname, initials): *BRIDON R.S.*

Degree: *Ph.D.*

Year: *1925*

This thesis is an unpublished typescript and the copyright is held by the author. *All persons consulting this thesis, or having copies made, must sign the Copyright Declaration below.*

Copying regulations: (1)

This thesis may be copied in whole or in part for the use of individuals and for libraries wishing to add this thesis to their stock. *Copying must be done by Edinburgh University Library.*

Copyright Declaration:

I undertake fully to observe the author's copyright in this thesis, not to publish the whole or any part of it without the author's written permission, and not to allow any other person to use any copy made for me.

## Chief Authorities Consulted.

Histories of Scotland, by

Hume Brown  
Fraser Tytler  
Terry  
Hill Burton  
Lang  
Johnston  
Robertson  
Aikman.

Church Histories, by

Cunningham  
Grub  
Bellesheim  
Knox  
Calderwood  
Spottiswoode  
Row  
Cook.

Cook, History of the Reformation.

Terry, The Scottish Parliaments.

Rait, do.

Sir Walter Scott, History of Scotland.

Martin Hume, Treason and Plot.

Wilson, Life of James VI.

T.F. Henderson, Life of James I.

Chambers, Life of James VI.

Chambers, Annals.

Harris, Historical and Critical Account.

Cochran-Patrick, Coinage of Scotland.

Arnot, History of Edinburgh.

Mathieson, Religion and Politics.

McCrie, Life of Andrew Mwlville.

Sir Wm. Purves, Revenue of the Sc. Crown.

Register of the Privy Council.

Exchequer Rolls.

Statutes.

Calendar of Sc. Papers. (Vol. 10 in press)

Calendar of State Papers, Foreign.

Calendar of State Papers, Spanish.

Calendar of Venetian Papers.

Hamilton Papers.

Miscellaneous Papers illustrating reigns of Mary and Jas. VI.

Acts of the General Assembly.

Teulet, Papiers.

Keith, Affairs.

Bannatyne, Memorials.

Sir Jas. Melville, Memoirs.



Diurnal of Occurrents.

Letters and State Papers relating to the Master of Gray.

Extracts from the Despatches of M. Courcelles.

Letters and State Papers of the Reign of James VI.

State Papers of Thomas, Earl of Melros.

Correspondence of James VI and Sir Robert Cecil.

J.T.G.Craig, Papers rel. to the Marriage of Jas. VI.

Moysie, Memoirs.

Anonymous History of James the Sext.

James Melville, Diary.

Sir Ralph Winwood, Documents.

Bowes, Correspondence.

Crawford, Memoirs.

The Works of James VI.

Letters of Elizabeth and James VI.

Birch, Negotiations between England, France and Brussels.

Herries, Historical Memoirs.

Sir William Fraser's Books on the Families of

Elphinstone

Melville

Johnstone

Wemyss

Cromartie

Douglas

Haddington.

Historical Manuscript Commission Reports.

MSS. Preserved in Register House, Edinburgh.

The Accounts of the Collector General of the Thirds.

The Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer.

Supplementary Parliamentary Papers.

Miscellaneous State Papers.

Miscellaneous Exchequer Papers, Vol. 1.

Royal Letters, Taxation, 1597-1632.

Scheme of the Household, 1582.

The Accounts of the Cunzie House.

The Accounts of the Master of Works, Vol. 8, Holyrood.

## SYNOPSIS.

### Introduction.

The difficulties and critical nature of the reign.

### Chapter I.

Causes of the Poverty of James VI.

### Chapter II.

James VI's Poverty Illustrated.

### Chapter III.

The Results of James VI's Poverty on his Home Policy.

### Chapter IV.

The Results of James VI's Poverty on his Foreign Policy.

### Conclusion.

## Introduction.

Few reigns are so difficult to understand as that of the sixth James of Scotland; there are so many sudden and revolutionary changes in foreign and domestic policy, that the thread of the story is often lost, and we begin to think that there is no connecting link. In fact the reign appears to be a series of disconnected chapters which might bear as titles the names of the most prominent men of the time, with James a shadowy figure in the background, too irresolute or too indifferent to pursue a settled policy and assume definite control. But there is a connecting link, a keynote to the reign, which, while it does not explain the whole of the tortuous policy of regents and king, does help towards a clearer understanding of the period. This is the financial position of the government.

The impecuniosity of the Scottish crown, although not a new thing, was especially acute between the years 1567 and 1603, and it is impossible to study the reign from the financial point of view and not feel pity for James, who seemed eager to do the right thing for his country, anxious to utilise his talents for statecraft for his country's glory, and yet was terribly conscious of the weakness of his central government, lacking the necessary patriotic advisers, and lacking above all the money to rule well. Always did he find his poverty the main

obstacle to his success, his talents limited by his purse. It is futile to blame the regents or the king for their shameless begging, although it is difficult to refrain from a smile at the tricks they employed to obtain money. And when it is known that the government was always hampered by poverty and never able to put a well-considered policy into execution, it is time to revise our verdict: James no longer appears to be 'the wisest fool in Christendom' or 'James the Shifty', but a man deserving at least of our pity if not of our admiration.

Again, it is a commonplace of history to praise the ability with which his great contemporary, Elizabeth, faced the great difficulties of her time, and overcame them, but her very success is apt to blind us to the ignoble means she employed, and we are apt to forget how much she owed to her advisers. On the other hand how rarely is it emphasised that James had to face difficulties and dangers equally serious with less support, and yet because he had not her glowing success, we deal out not praise but blame.

The difficulties of the reign were enormous; the Scottish baronage, always the obstacle to the establishment of a strong monarchy, were now more than ever dangerous, having profited by the Reformation to make themselves richer than the crown; the Church, too, was a serious rival, and began to claim for itself the status not only of a state within the state, but of the state itself, with the



right to control even the monarch. Thus the crown faced with these two difficulties could only buy off the hostility of its rivals by granting concessions, which, in themselves weakened the central power. As if this was not enough, for a long time the country was divided into two factions, and the civil war brought great misery upon the country. Abroad Scotland had difficult problems to deal with; its foreign policy was carefully watched by the powers of Europe, and because of the importance of that foreign policy relations with the continent became very intimate and delicate. With conditions so grave the government had a difficult task to perform, and worst of all it had to do so without sufficient money.

It has been attempted here to account for James' poverty, to illustrate it, and to indicate its influence upon his domestic and foreign policy. The object has not been to investigate in every detail any one branch of the subject, but to treat the whole subject generally.

## Chapter I.

### Causes of the Poverty of James VI.

- (1) Scotland naturally a poor country.
- (2) Excessive liberality of Mary.
- (3) Effects of the wars of the minority. Plundering of the royal estates. Difficulties of raising revenue.
- (4) Weakness of the administration. Taxes not paid. Taxes paid, but not transmitted to the Exchequer.
- (5) Lack of control over the central officials.
- (6) Character of James. His liberality. Alienations. Acts of Revocation. Explanation of his conduct.
- (7) Lack of system. Attempt on the part of Parliament to check this. The Royal Letters re. Taxation.
- (8) Difficulties with Parliament about taxation.

## Chapter I. The Causes of the Poverty of James VI.

"The beggarly King of Scots". (Cal. S. Papers, Fn.  
Jan. 16/26, 1583)

"My misthriving in money matters". (Bas. Dor. Works,  
P. 169.)

I. In justice to James it must be said that while much of his poverty was due to the weakness and foolishness which characterised his reign, yet much of it arose out of circumstances over which he had no control. First among these must be placed the well-known fact that the country was naturally poor. Queen Mary had found out to her cost the great difference between the luxurious French court and the poverty-stricken Scottish court, and long after she left the country she baldly stated that Scotland 'was too poor to maintain a king'. (1) The natural poverty of the kingdom always struck English visitors forcibly, and one of them even asked, "Was Scotland not a poor, barren country rather craving increase than able to spare anything?" (2) Another declared that the Scots were as envious of England's peace and plenty as they were impatient of their own beggary. (3) The people in the infrequent intervals of peace seem to have lived at best a cheerless life, ignorant of the comforts to which the average Englishman was accustomed, while during the long intervals of war, they lived in abject misery. The soil was not fertile except

(1) Cal. Sc. P. Vol. 7, 4th Septr., 1584.

(2) do. Vol. 4, 11th May, 1573.

(3) H. MSS, Salisbury, Part 8, P. 170.



in the central and narrow coastal plains, and these were precisely the districts most liable to suffer from the ravages of war. Scottish trade was still far from lucrative, as the exports could only have totalled some £200,000 Scots, (3) and thus the income of the crown from the customs duties, even if they had all been collected, was not great. Lord Seton described the natural poverty of the country very concisely when he said that it was notorious that sundry towns in England and the Low Countries could advance more money than all Scotland together. (1)

II. From his mother James inherited much of his financial embarrassment, because her reign was marred by an excessive liberality to her favourites at the expense of the property of the crown, in addition to great personal extravagance. The records abound in illustrations, and so well was the evil known that we find that shrewd observer, Elizabeth, attributing James' poverty to "the over liberal spending of Queen Mary during her reign". (2) So generous or weak was she that she often found great difficulty in finding the means to satisfy the greedy requests of the courtiers; when crown property failed, she had recourse to the thirds which at first had been ample to pay stipends and provide

(1) Tytler, 4, p. 282.

(2) Cal. Sc. P. Vol. 7, 587, April, 1585.

(3) do. Vol. 5, 638, 1580.

also for the maintenance of the household. As a result the ministers frequently had to forego their stipends while the royal household also suffered. So serious did the matter become that the Privy Council had to intervene, and they were compelled to revoke all her grants and prohibit the practice in the future unless with their consent. (1) A year later, however, we find the same courtiers eagerly endeavouring to secure more crown land, and the Treasury officials, faced with expenses amounting to £35,000 in addition to large quantities of wheat, oats and beer, had again to secure an edict against the "unsaciabill askaris". (2) A list drawn up in 1573 shows how the royal revenues had been squandered among the nobles: many had feus of the temporal lands of the abbey; Bothwell was Lieutenant General of the Borders with more than £500; he had also received the Abbey of Melrose and Haddington worth £1,000, the castle and lordship of Dunbar worth a similar amount, an allowance as Captain of Edinburgh Castle also bringing him £1,000, the Duchy of Orkney and Shetland with many merks, and the Queen's jewels worth about 30,000 crowns. (3) This reckless generosity was so evil in its results that it formed one of the charges brought forward by the barons against the Queen in 1565; they declared that neglecting

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 1, 10th Octr., 1564.

(2) do. /, 22nd Decr., 1565.

(3) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 4, Novr. 13th, 1583.

her proper advisers, she had been guided by "sinister men", and "so did proceed the dilapidating and waisting of the patrimonie and propertie of the crown, which within these eight months bypast is diminished more than the third part thereof, to the manifest danger of the state and great hurt of the lieges". The result was the taxing and "tousting" of the nation to repair that which was so "indiscreetly dilapidated". (1) But there was another result: the men charged with providing the royal household with food etc. had to do so with a revenue so depleted that they were forced to plunge themselves into debt, and the regent Morton later assigned the poverty of the government in his day to the fact that their superexpenses had to be met out of the funds at his disposal. (2)

III. Another reason for the poverty of James Sixth is to be found in the peculiar circumstances of his accession: there could be little hope of a wealthy monarchy when the country was in the throes of civil war. The greater part of the country did not acknowledge the king's authority, law and order could not be maintained, and it was left to each individual subject to provide the means for his own protection. The records teem with stories of thefts and murders, and even when the injured parties did receive decrees in their favour, the crimes went unpunished. Even horning was laughed at, rebels "taking na feir thareof". (3)

(1) Calderwood, Vol.2, Appendix A.  
 (2) Cal. Sc. P. Vol. 4, 13th Novr., 1573.  
 (3) Reg. P. C., Vol.2, 27th Decr., 1569.



"The lieges were slane, heriit and put to extreme povertie. Reif, crueltie and depredatioun went unpunished". (1) The official who arrested cattle to secure payment of taxation was apt to find them stolen before they could be sold. (2) With conditions like this the country was steadily heading for bankruptcy, and so poor were the subjects of the king becoming that many years afterwards it was very difficult for the government to raise a revenue by taxation. Even the royal rents and the customs were difficult to gather. For example the Custumar of Aberdeen, Thomas Menzies, rendered no account and made no payment from 1565 to 1573. The Lords of the Exchequer complained that "he was oftymes callit, but nocht comperit", and he was put to the horn, a new official being appointed. What became of these customs, however, will never be known; either they were never collected, or if they were, they were either kept by the custumar himself, or handed over to the men of the Queen's party. (3) Another inconvenience arising from the civil war was that it was possible for two men to claim the right of collecting the revenue, one holding the Queen's and the other the King's commission. Since tradesmen did not know to whom they should pay their dues, it frequently happened that the money was not collected at all, or as at Perth,

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 2, 27th Jany., 1573.

(2) do. 8th Octr., 1573. Vol. 201.467.

(3) Ex. Rolls, Lib. Respons., 2nd Mar., 1573. Many collectors of Thirds refused to give in their money, and so the Collector General was superexpendit to £4,765-13. Misc. Ex. Papers, Vol. 1, 1573.

they were forced to pay twice over. The Perth merchants had been in the habit of paying for their cockets, i.e. their customs duties, to the Custumar of Perth, and the goods were then shipped from Dundee, but at that port the custumar insisted on charging for another cocket. This man like many another in that time of weak government was often summoned but never appeared. (1) Worse still, it was possible for men to pretend to hold official positions and collect taxes which never reached the crown; John Mowbray collected the duties on salt and other goods, but never gave in any account of his takings and so defrauded the government of part of its revenue. (2) During the wars the Queen's men lifted the king's revenues wherever they could, issued cockets in spite of Acts of Parliament and decrees of the Privy Council, and coined money, all to the king's obvious loss. During the wars that filled the years of the minority, then, and especially during the first years of that period, a considerable portion of the revenue failed to reach the government, and, as the expenses were very high because of the wars, debt was being rapidly piled up.

But there was another and a very grave result of the

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 20, Lib. Respons., 18th Febr., 1569. p. 397  
(2) do. do. 3rd Sept., 1579. p. 546

wars of the minority: the nobles of the king's own faction, and even the officials of the government seem to have been guilty of taking advantage of the king's youth to plunder the revenues. James himself long afterwards spoke of their greed, and gave it as one of the reasons for his poverty that in his childhood his domains and treasure were taken possession of by men who were really traitors, although they posed as patriotic members of his party. (1) It was commonly rumoured that the Treasurer, Comptroller and the Collectors of the Thirds had misappropriated large sums to their own use, (2) and, apart from this deliberate plundering, there was inevitably a great deal of carelessness in the administration of the royal revenues and lands, thus making it possible for officials in all subordinate posts to copy the example of their betters. Instead of finding the accumulated revenues making him a rich man, James discovered on taking up the government on his own shoulders, that "most things wherein his profit should have risen have rather been subject to spoil than preserved to his use." (3) Bowes, the English representative, who had ample opportunity to find out the truth, deliberately attributed James' financial worries to the long civil wars of the minority.

Had the king been old enough to control the government

(1) Cal. S. P. Sp., Vol. 3, 19th Febr., 1584.

(2) Bowes, Corresp., P. 28; Reg. P. C., Vol. 2, 5th Novr., 1569.

(3) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 6, 9th July, 1583.



//

during these wars, he would of course have been enriched with the confiscated estates of the nobles fighting for Mary, and thus much of the subsequent trouble would have been avoided, but unfortunately the young monarch was at the mercy of the leaders of his own party, who were all determined to make as much as possible for themselves out of the situation. They seized the property of the enemy. Like the English barons during "The Nineteen Long Winters" of Stephen's reign, the cause of king or queen was but an excuse, in many cases, for carrying on private war to enrich themselves at the expense of their enemies. In fact one great obstacle to the making of peace between the two parties was that both were unwilling to agree to a settlement that included as one of its terms the restoration of this property. So Elizabeth found in 1572 when arranging for the truce of that year. (1) As the king's party triumphed it was men of the stamp of Morton who benefited most; he forced Mar, the regent, to buy his support with the gifts of the parsonage of Glasgow, the escheat of 400 merks of Lord Fleming, the bishopric of Moray, pensions out of the revenues of the bishopric of Glasgow and the tack of the lead mines. When he became regent the whole country groaned under his oppression, and towards the end of his career he

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 4, 8th March, 1572.



tried to flee to France with a fortune which the French ambassador believed to be about 600,000 crowns, the proceeds of his exactions. (1) All the good money seems to have been in his hands, and the currency was the so-called "Dalkeith money", which the people were forced to accept at its face value; the Mint was simply regarded by him as another means of adding to his fortune. Although the modern view of Morton is that he is not so black as his contemporaries have painted him, it is still a fact that his avarice was one reason for the poverty of the young king. In 1578, when he fell from power, a move was made to "examine his purse" as if his fortune was to be made "a fund to supply those wants of which he knew himself the author." (2)

IV. Another cause of the poverty of James Sixth is to be found in the weakness of his administration when he was on the throne. Events moved in a vicious circle where James was concerned; he was weak because he was poor, and poor because he was weak. Even if he made elaborate preparations for raising revenue he was never sure that he would get the money. The nobles were much too strong for him, and not only did they frequently refuse to pay taxation,<sup>(3)</sup> but they were sometimes strong rivals for the collection of the

(1) Teulet, Vol. 2, P. 418.

(2) Crawford's Memoirs, P. 333.

(3) Misc. Exr. Papers, Vol. I; 23rd Jan'y., 1582/3

royal revenue. For example the crown depended on the mines for a part of the revenue, but the Scottish nobility opposed the attempt to tax the mines in their lands, saying that they were not the king's at all, and they produced in proof of their position their charters to show that they held their lands "a summo celo usque ad imos inferos". (1) Again, in 1597, Parliament voted a taxation of 200,000 merks for the expenses of certain contemplated embassies to foreign countries, to be paid by the first of April 1598. "Grit slakness" was observed in the payment, because some went voluntarily to the horn, knowing well, that in spite of the decree of escheat they would be able to enjoy the revenues from their estates. (2) When a rebel's lands were confiscated, they were often disposed to someone who acted as agent for the rebel and transmitted to him a regular supply of money wherever he was. The Government allowed the practice to go on, either because it was too weak to stop it, or because of a desire to preserve a party for the king, in spite of prohibitions by the Privy Council. (3) Even if this method failed, there was always another way out of the difficulty; deeds were forged pretending that the lands had been gifted away before the act of treason was committed, and the recipient simply acted as a steward for the rebel. That the king should allow this to go on,

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol 5, 638, 1580.

(2) Reg. P. C. Vol. 5, 14th April, 1598. p. 451.

(3) do., Vol. 4, 11th Octr., 19th Decr., 1587.

that he should himself be a party to it, is a striking illustration of the weakness of the central government. Similarly, it was an easy matter for the officials entrusted with the collection of revenue to appropriate a considerable share of the proceeds in the form of fees, or simply to neglect to transmit to the Treasury. Sheriffs were frequently summoned for not rendering an account of their receipts; in 1576, so we read in the Exchequer Rolls, 'the haill sheriffs, baillies, stewards and other receivers of the king's property' of between eighty and ninety burghs had refused to bring in their receipts, and were fined £10. Every part of the country is represented in the list from Lauder to Aberdeen. (1) The customs of Kirkudbright were withheld from 1560 to 1580. (2) The government was forced to introduce stricter methods of control, and sometimes the offender was imprisoned, as was the Baillie of Lauder in Edinburgh Castle in 1577 to remain there until he paid his dues to the king. (3) But later a better method was adopted, by which, instead of the government waiting the customary time for rendering accounts, these officials came to be regarded as crown debtors and not as servants, and they were forced to find security for the payment of the money by a certain time. The security was usually

- (1) Ex. Rolls, Vol.20, 2nd Aug., 1576. p.503
- (2) do. Vol.21, Minutes, 8th Sept., 1580. p.204
- (3) do. Vol.20, Lib. Respons., p.517. 1577.



furnished by a citizen of the capital with whom the king could easily deal. (1) We find entries like the following in the Rolls;- "Comperit personalie James Stewart and John Stewart, and band and oblist thame cautioneris, soverties and principall dettouris for John Stewart, Schireff Principall of Bute, who having futit his comptes, is fund restand awand to the Comptroller £133-12-6 2/3d." (2)

This method of ensuring the receipt of revenue, in itself a confession of weakness, received the sanction of the Estates by an act of 1587, when in addition it was enacted that reliefs and other feudal taxes were to be entered in the accounts and the sheriffs could be poinded for the amounts owing. But never did the scheme work satisfactorily, and it is not to be wondered at that James adopted the French method of farming out the customs for five years to six commissioners in return for £4,000 and thirty tuns of Bordeaux wine. (3) In spite of all these precautions, however, the difficulty of controlling the collectors was a constant one, and as late as 1599 a great many did not account to the Treasury, and sheriffs, baillies, feuars and custumars to the number of fifty had to be put to the horn. (4)

The Borders naturally gave James particular difficulty,

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 21. p. liv.

(2) do. do. Minutes, ~~3rd May~~, 1583. p. 567.

(3) do. Vol. 21, p. 561.

(4) do. Vol. 23, p. 512. 1599. A similar thing happened in 1602. Misc. Ex. Papers, Vol. 1, 1602.

and it was not till after the union of the crowns that he was able by means of the Commissioners of the Middle Shires to maintain order there and ensure that the taxes were paid. Not only did the crown suffer, but so also did the unfortunate officials entrusted with the task of local government. For instance there is the case of Archibald, Earl of Angus, who held the post of Sheriff Principal of Berwick. He was summoned before the Exchequer to answer for his failure to forward the sum of £2,593-12-8 in addition to victuals, due to the crown in respect of "males, fermes, few-fermes, dowl<sup>b</sup>ingis of few fermes, blanchis, relivis etc." for the period 1573 to 1580. It appears that not only was he unable with the forces at his command to collect this revenue, but that he had spent a great deal of his own money in an attempt to keep his district quiet. (1) Again, William Earl of Angus was appointed Lieutenant of the West Marches, and according to the terms of his commission he was to receive half of the escheats in payment of his expenses. As it turned out he had to spend 60,000 merks of his own, and this sum James never repaid him. (2)

V. It seems to have been as difficult to control the

(1) Fraser, Douglas Book, Vol. 4, p. 25.

(2) do. do. Vol. 2. p. 396.

finance officials of the central government, many of whom seem to have taken every opportunity of enriching themselves at the king's expense. According to Richard Douglas there was "greed and negligence on the part of his officers", (1) and "sloth and evil handling of his rents". (2) James himself in a letter to Mar stated that he was "utterlie wearied and ashamed" of the misgovernment which was due to his nobles refusing to co-operate with him and to his extreme want, which, he said, was caused by "the mishandling of my rentis be my cairless and greedie officiaris that intromettis thairwith". (3) During the regency, as has been noted, this abuse was very rife, and the Estates recognised it as 'an evil of the greatest importance' that the custodians of the royal castles had been making 'mercat' of them, and had actually forced the regents to purchase them again. (4) The Treasurer and the Comptroller were also accused of misappropriation; every year they deducted from the receipts as a first charge their superexpense incurred in the previous year, and there were suspicions as to the accuracy of the amounts they claimed. The Comptroller also was charged with retaining for his private use some of the money which should have been expended in provisions for the royal household. They seem to have acted as partners in a scheme of gigantic fraud, and when in 1582 these matters

- (1) H. MSS. Salisbury, Part 6, p. 8-9.
- (2) do. do. Part 8, p. 485.
- (3) do. Mar & Kellie, p. 43.
- (4) Acts, 1581. III, 226.



were being looked into, they became nervous and agreed to demit office if they received their dues, the Treasurer claiming £60,000, and the Comptroller £13,000. They unfortunately accused each other of overstating their claims, and so proved their guilt. Yet they were both reinstated. (1) All this was well known to the king, and we must assume that these crimes went unpunished, simply because he felt himself too weak to deal with them, but he determined to warn his son against the evil, and advised him to "Choose honest, diligent, mean but responsible men to be your receivers in money matters; mean, I say, that ye may when ye please, take a sharp account of their intromission, without peril of their breeding any trouble to your estate; for this over-sight has been the greatest cause of my misthriving in money matters". (2)

VI. It must be admitted, then, that much of James' poverty was due to circumstances outside his control, but undoubtedly for a great deal of it he must himself be blamed. It is difficult to understand how a monarch so conscious of his constant need of money should have been so criminally careless of it when he had any. He seems to have had no idea of the value of money, and any courtier who made himself an amusing companion had little reason to complain of a lack of gifts. Royal estates, church revenues, escheats

(1) Bowes, Correspond., P. 232, 2nd Novr., 1582.

(2) Bas. Dor., Works, P. 169.



wardships, all were alike to him a source from which he might reward greedy favourites, or from which he felt compelled to placate those who had him in their power, or whose support he felt himself to require. This trait in his character was well known and often excited remark. Says one, "He gives all from himself, and raises great taxations from his poor people, which brings him in great contempt. It is plainly said that he is moving to his own destruction like his mother". (1) His foolish liberality is most noticeable in connection with his favourites. Thus when in 1579 Esme Stuart arrived, "he obtained blyth presence and sik countenance of the king that in short tyme he obtained large revenues baith spirituall and temporall". (2) He became Earl of Lennox and Abbot of Arbroath, and keeper of Dumbarton Castle with all the profits for one year and further during the king's pleasure. (3) But even although he was so well rewarded there seems to have been no limit to his greed, for he and Arran were charged with constantly employing all their wits and strength to spoil the king of his rents and patrimony; the Council only met to further their ambition and greed. (4) Yet the infatuated James was liberal to the end, and when Lennox had to leave ~~the~~

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 13th Decr., 1588.

(2) An. Hist. Jas. VI., P. 178.

(3) Cal. Sc. P., Vol 5, 2nd Aug., 1580.

(4) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 6, "Objections against Lennox & Arran", 12th Septr., 1583.

the country, although in desperate straits himself, he sent more than he could well spare to his old favourite, "five hundred crowns from his own small store". (1) In 1584 the real ruler of the country was Arran, and to him James gave quite as liberally; he was made Captain of Edinburgh Castle with full control of its treasures, and later Dumbarton, Stirling and Blackness Castles were handed over to him. All the royal jewels and other valuables were placed in the custody of Arran and his wife and within a few days she attempted to raise money on them. No attempt was made to take proceedings against her. (2) But the king's liberality was not confined to a few. All friendly barons received generous marks of the royal favour, and in many cases he rewarded "vain youths and proud fools" with whatever lands or money he happened to possess at the time. Very often he left himself with so little that he could not provide for his "small and unkingly household", and even if Elizabeth had sent him a million pounds he would still have been in want because the courtiers would have obtained it. Such are the observations of an Englishman, who concluded that it was "indeed a strange government". (3) When traitors were punished and their estates confiscated, James threw away good opportunities of increasing the wealth

(1) Bowes, Correspond., P. 262.

(2) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 7, 16th Aug., 6th Septr., 1584.

(3) do. Vol. 9, 18th Decr., 1588.

of the crown, because he seemed unable to deny the requests of the courtiers who gathered round eager to share in the plunder. In 1584 the Gowrie lands were given to Crawford, Glencairn and others, (1) and, simply because he did on this occasion reserve to himself some of the most valuable of the lands, it was thought so remarkable that Fontenay, writing to Mary, felt constrained to say, "I see him in good resolution to take heed more carefully than ever to enrich his crown as much as possible." (2) But the good resolution was soon broken, and James soon reverted to his old foolish ways. Foreigners frequently remarked on the strange position of a king eternally wearied "with their endless importunities", and he used to speak about his courtiers "in brode language as he that is not ignorant how they use him". (3)

So serious did the situation become, because in the absence of these revenues taxation became a pressing necessity, that Parliament and the Privy Council had to intervene. The records make very melancholy reading, being simply a long list of revocations and prohibitions on the one hand, and princely promises made and broken on the other. Either James could not or would not keep his word. In 1578, when the king was preparing to take up the task

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol 7, 10th June, 1584.

(2) do. do. 15th Aug., 1584.

(3) Papers, Master of Gray, P. 5.



of government, the Privy Council made an examination of the whole financial position. They discussed the enormous sums of money required to maintain the royal household, repair the palaces, maintain peace at home and provide for the sending of ambassadors abroad, but they found that the rents, which ought to have been sufficient for the purpose had been "so greatly hurt and diminished", and that prices had risen so much, that James could not continue solvent, unless he made up his mind to cease his reckless generosity.

(1) Such grants were expressly forbidden unless with the consent of the council. A few months later the evil had again appeared, and it was found that some people "mair respecting their own particular profit, have moved the king to make grants of the superplus, so that there remained little or nothing for the stipends, or to supply the public and needful affairs of the state". All the grants were revoked, and the Collector General<sup>w</sup> was ordered to apply the entire fund to its proper purpose and neglect all claims made on it by virtue of the king's precept. (2) But almost immediately this official had again reason to complain, and this time the revocation was extended to cover all grants whether made by the king or by the regents. (3) Very soon action had to be taken again, special mention being made

- (1) Reg. P. C.<sup>JP</sup> Vol. 2, 4th April, 1578.
- (2) do. do. 16th Sept., 1578.
- (3) do. do. 24th Sept., 1578.

this time of grants of pensions on such an extravagant scale that it was impossible to meet the ordinary expenses of the royal household; James was forced to revoke all unprofitable alienations of royal rents and lands, and the Comptroller was ordered to collect all the rents that properly belonged to the crown. (1) Now, although this decree was ratified by the Parliament in 1579, we find the same matter mentioned among "the mony abuses and gret enormiteis abusing the liberal natur of the king" under consideration of the Privy Council in 1580. It appears that, in, spite of the new law, application had been made by courtiers to James privately, and he had weakly allowed himself to be induced to subscribe to a number of alienations. This threw the finances into utter confusion, because his officers did not receive intimation of the gifts, and thus were suddenly called upon to face a diminution of income. As things were they simply did not know how much they could depend upon. To remedy this the Privy Council decreed that such application to the king was illegal, and that if any gift were made of crown property, no account of it was to be taken. (2) But the Privy Council and Parliament were more anxious to protect James against himself than was James to do the wise thing, and in 1581 an act was passed revoking new grants. In the following year the Council stated that

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 2, 22nd Novr., 1578.

(2) do. Vol. 2, 4th May, 1580. p. 286  
3.

the king's policy was "not tolerable nor may not continue", because the king's debts had reached the high figure of £45,376-10-5d, and drastic measures had to be taken. Sir Robert Melville was made Treasurer Depute to assist the Earl of Gowrie, the Treasurer, and the two were instructed that their main duty was to see that the king's debts were paid, and that the royal household was better furnished. Moreover James made a solemn promise "in verbo principis" that he would never again give away any crown property, (1) a promise which he was not long in breaking, because in 1583 the evil practice had again appeared, and on such an extensive scale, James being under the influence of the Earl of Arran at the time, that even the favourites were alarmed. Desperate attempts were made to retrieve the lost possessions, and a very comprehensive decree of revocation was passed by the Privy Council, covering grants from the royal patrimony, the church revenues and the profits of justice, and laying down penalties for those who attempted to procure grants in the future. (2) In spite of this, however, and in spite of the fact that the king's debts were steadily increasing, it is surprising to find James still guilty of giving away the very sources of his revenue, and renewing those gifts which had been annulled. Another act was passed, (3) and in April of the same year, 1585, another

- (1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 3, 13th April, 1582. p. 479.  
 (2) do. Vol. 3, 8th Novr., 1583. p. 609.  
 (3) do. Vol. 3, 19th Jany., 1585. p. 717.



promise was made, but the abuse continued, and a more serious attempt was made to deal with it by the act of <sup>1585</sup>~~1586~~ which (1) cancelled all alienations of crown property made since the reign of James the Fifth, James making the usual promise to abstain from the practice until his finances were on a better footing. Since the reckless generosity of Mary, the regents and of James himself was by this sweeping act undone, the crown was enormously enriched, but the very nature of it made its enforcement an impossibility, and in any case James could not refuse a request. Thus in 1586 the king confessed that he had been "enormelie hurte and prejugeit" by his unprofitable dispositions, and that "the necessar provisions of his house, and utheris his maist urgent chairgeis wer not able dewlie and tymouslie to be maid"; previous acts of revocation were confirmed, (2) but with no effect. It is rather remarkable to read in the new Privy Council decree that no notice is to be taken of any grant of crown property bearing the king's signature, and that any official who disregards this instruction is to answer to the king for his disobedience! (3) In 1587 a Convention of the Estates attempted the thankless task of introducing order into the royal finances, and the sensible principle was then laid down that James must put his house in order and pay his debts before he extended his liberality to

(1) Acts, 1585. <sup>308</sup> III, ~~439~~. Ratified {1587, III, 439.  
 (2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 12th Octr., 1586. p. III.  
 (3) do. Vol. 4, 27th May, 1587. p. 181.



his friends. James made a fresh promise. (1) Acts of Revocation, however, had to be passed when he attained his majority and in 1592, 1593 and 1597, but they were all fruitless, even although the last of these said that "it shall not be leasum "for the king to give grants of crown property in future. In 1600 he summoned a Convention to deal with his finances, and in the letter of summons he confessed that his poverty was caused "in ane pairt be our over grit liberalitie", and he argued that since individual subjects had benefited by it, it was only fair that they should help to find a remedy. (2) As late as 1621 we find the matter was still occupying the attention of the king: he wrote to the Treasurer, Mar, that the royal rents were exhausted by pensions, little or nothing was left to maintain his estates, his coffers were empty, and "we are run in grite debt". He gave instructions for a pruning of the list, and admitted that while some of the pensioners had deserved well of him, others had not. (3)

Obviously, then, one of the most important reasons for James' poverty lies in his own boundless generosity, his criminal carelessness in regard to what was the very basis of his power. To give an explanation of his strange conduct is not easy; certainly the usual remark, 'weakness of character' will hardly explain why the practice continued so long after

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 6th June, 1587. p. 185.

(2) Fraser, Wemyss Book, Vol 3, p. 37.

(3) H. MSS., Mar & Kellie, p. 99.

he had experienced the great disadvantages of his policy. Not could it have been due to a weak desire to earn a reputation for liberality. Was he threatened by his barons, and was this the only way of meeting the blackmailers, who had many opportunities through his reign of joining the ranks of his enemies? Or is the reason not rather that he was doing his utmost to build up for himself a party among the aristocracy to assist him in his constant struggles, and that his very poverty prevented him from making rewards out of any other source? It must be remembered that with an empty treasury it was only by gifts out of the crown lands thirds, profits of justice, feudal taxes etc., that he could reward special services to the state, and so without such gifts his rule would have been impossible. Again, it had been established by an act of James II in 1455, which James VI took a solemn oath to observe, that such grants could be revoked at any time, and the recipients could be called on to refund all arrears owing to the crown. Professor Rait suggests that the right to revoke may have been one of the reasons that tempted monarchs to make grants. James, too, was not the only offender, and it would be difficult to point to any king or regent who did not carry out the same policy. (1) Whatever the reason James realised only too well the folly of his actions and bitterly did he regret it; out of

(1) Rait, Scottish Parliaments, p. 484-6.

his own bitter experience he strongly advised his son to "Cast not away without cause". The crown revenues, he said, should be kept "sacrosanctum", otherwise liberality would sink into prodigality "in helping others with your and your successors' hurt". (1)

VII. Again, James was most unbusinesslike in his dealings: his very lack of money seemed to force him to grab hastily at any money that happened to come his way to satisfy the most pressing needs of the moment, without pausing to consider whether some other debt had not a more legitimate claim. This led to great confusion, because the treasury officials, having depended on a certain amount of income to meet expenses, suddenly found that income seriously diminished, and allocated by the king to some totally different purpose. In addition they were directed by the king's precept to pay debts contracted by him, to lend him money and to meet a multitude of charges which did not really come under their jurisdiction. There was no division of labour or clear definition of duties: the Comptroller was properly concerned with the expenses of the royal household, while the Treasurer should have met charges of a more public nature such as the maintenance of the palaces, expenses of war and administration of law and special gifts by the crown to servants and others. But under James it was impossible to keep to any system, and every officer entrusted with the spending of money suffered.

(1) Bas. Dor., p. 178.



As an example of this, we find in the Accounts of the Cunzie House a great number of payments made by order of the king for purposes that are not even remotely connected with the mint. Items like the following bulk very largely under Discharge;- £2,000 for the king's "claithis", £100 for a page and £1,000 for his "claithis", (1) repayment of £666-13-4d borrowed by the king, £80 for a furrier who had supplied the king, £1,000 for the king's 'nurse', £120 for goldsmith work, (2) and numerous grants to various officers and friends of the king. Systematic administration of the revenue was impossible under such chaotic conditions, and there could be no proper scrutiny of the nation's Balance Sheet. It can be imagined how difficult it was to check speculation, or enforce economy on the king who had so many funds to call upon. In an attempt to introduce order an Act was passed in 1592 instructing the various officers to "agree among themselves what duly and properly appertained to every one of their offices", but the lack of system continued all through the reign.

Further, James had a habit of anticipating revenue and spending it in advance before it actually reached <sup>his</sup> ~~the king's~~ ~~treasury~~, although it must be admitted that this policy did not originate under him. In 1570 the regent, Lennox, wrote to the Lords of the Exchequer stating that Sir M. Campbell

(1) Accounts, Cunzie House, MSS. Reg. Ho., April 1582- May 1583.  
 (2) do. do. do. May 1583- April 1586.

of Loudon, Sheriff of Ayr, in return for many acts of kindness and various sums of money advanced<sup>7</sup> to the king had been granted full quittance of all dues for the lands he held of the king. Although the sum concerned here was only a little over £800, yet it was large enough to cause some <sup>anxiety</sup> ~~concern~~ to the officer concerned, who required every penny of revenue in order to balance his accounts without the usual melancholy conclusion, 'and so the comptur is superexpendit' etc. (1) James, however, soon fell into the same evil policy, and he was accused of having given away pensions out of the 'super-plus' before it was known that there would be any, and it required an act of revocation to remedy the matter. (2) It was no easy matter, as we have seen, to keep a check on James and we find that the Privy Council had to condemn the practice again and again. For example in 1587 it mentioned that by an act of Parliament of 1584 the monks' portions were assigned to the payment of the guard, yet the men had not been paid because James had disposed of the money in the usual manner-- gifts to his friends. These had to be revoked. (3) In the same year it was resolved that the money received from the lesser barons in return for their membership of Parliament, £40,000, was to be devoted to the guards, but it was found that the king had already devoted part of this sum to other purposes. In spite of this it was decreed that

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 20. etc.

(2) Reg. P.C., Vol. 4, 24th March, 1586.

(3) do. do. 11th Jany., 1587.



the previous arrangement should stand. Again when James was awaiting the arrival of his queen from Denmark a tax of £20,000 was raised to provide for the entertainment of her suite, but at once a call was made on the money to meet some of the more pressing of the king's debts, while £10,000 of it was given to the Comptroller who was very heavily superexpended.

This unsystematic policy was so annoying that Parliament had to take steps to prevent what was really misappropriation of supplies. In 1597 arrangements were being made to send a number of ambassadors abroad "for sundry weighty affairs", and to meet the expenses the Estates were asked to vote a sum of 200,000 merks. Minute instructions were laid down for the collection of the money, for the country was very angry at finding that "the money was not being bestowed on that end quhairfor it was destinat"; the Collector was ordered not to pay over any part of the sum on the authority of the king unless countersigned by certain overseers who were appointed in the act, so that "this present taxation be nawawes employed but to the furnissing of the said ambassadors", while if it was decided not to send them after all, then the Collector was to retain the money until the Parliament decided what was to be done with it. (1) In spite of all the precautions taken the ambassadors returned with "many chains and promises of friendship from the German

(1) ~~Reg. B. C.~~ Acts, IV, 142-6.



princes, but no return for the money spent". The people regarded the tax as a scheme to excuse raising money for "the particular of the courtiers", and "so is some of the king's poor estate presently". (1)

Evidence of the extent to which James interfered in the collection and allocation of this tax is furnished by a series of letters which he wrote to the Collector, Mark Ker of Prestongrange, Commendator of Newbattle and a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. James had in 1587 made him a grant of the lands of the suppressed monastery of Newbattle, and in 1591 created him Lord Newbottle. Doubtless James now argued that as he had been so generous to this man, he had a right to some return, and so we find him pestering the Collector with letters ordering him to pay to various people sums of money "out of the readiest of the taxation". Some of these letters order payment for purposes that have no connection with foreign embassies, and yet they are subscribed by the commissioners appointed by the act to prevent misappropriation. The letters are dated from 1597 to 1600 showing how slow was the collection, how weak was the government, and how reluctant were the people to help the king. It seems, also, that James pounced upon each instalment of the tax as it came in.

One letter ordered Newbattle to pay £20,000 to the Comptroller, Sir George Home, who had advanced it "of his

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 8, p. 485.

awn geir" at the king's command; when his "dearest brother" the Duke of Holstein was being entertained. James had promised faithfully that the debt would be paid out of the proceeds of the tax, and he actually assumed that it was granted "for defraying of the expenses of bur house and other things tending to our honour", whereas, when ordering payment to ambassadors, it is spoken of as "for directing of our ambassadors to foreign princes, our confederates". In another letter Mr. Robert Lindsay is to get 200 crowns in payment of <sup>a</sup> ~~another~~ debt. Sir David Murray of Gospertie received £2,000 for sums spent in "extraordinary charges of our house in banquetting the French ambassador". The Earl of Angus, Lieutenant of the "haill" Borders received £5,000 for expenses of his office; James admitted in this letter that the money should have been spent on the embassy to England. Lord Livingstone got 2,500 merks for money which had been spent by him in entertaining the king's "dearest dochteris". To Sir John Hamilton of Lettrik James had promised the balance of the taxation of the Sherifffdom of Lanark, amounting to 4,000 merks, in payment of a loan of 5,000 merks. Sir George Home of Spott, Master of the Gardrobe had spent of his own money £1,000 in repairing furniture etc. in preparation for the arrival of foreign ambassadors, and the tax paid this debt too. £7,057 was paid to George Heriot, younger, for jewellery to be given to the ambassadors. Robert Jowsie got £5,000, James alleging as an excuse that at his special command Jowsie had advanced this



sum for fitting out embassies. In another document James acknowledged receipt of various sums from the Collector:-

"Lent to our self, 100 crowns."	£333-6-8.
do. 40 crowns	£133-6-8.
Given to the guards, 100 crowns	£333-6-8.
To George Heriot, elder, for ane ring	
70 crowns	£233-6-8.
To Barnard Lindsay, "for ane hors"	£266-13-4.
For a clock to the Queen	£133-6-8.
Total	£1,433-6-8. (1)

Systematic administration of the revenues was impossible when the king himself was guilty of helping himself from a fund raised for foreign affairs in order to meet past obligations and present needs.

VIII. Finally, James could not rely with any feeling of confidence on the Estates for assistance in his difficulties; they were unwilling to submit to taxation when they knew that he was largely to blame for his poverty and suspected that grants in aid would be swallowed up by the courtiers. It is not till this reign that we see the new feature in Scottish history of Parliament claiming the control of supply; Scotland in fact is at least two centuries behind England in this respect. How far there was any constitutional law to govern the question of the rights of king and Parliament over taxation it is difficult to determine with our present knowledge, but the principle had been laid down in the time of David II that the king should live "of his own", that is on the rents from the crown property, burgh mailis, customs, (1) Royal Letters, Taxation, 1597-1632, MSS. Reg. House.



his casualties, fines, feudal taxes, escheats etc., without burdening his subjects with taxation. (1) But this was only gained by the infant institution because of the peculiar needs of the king at the time, to meet the ransom to England, and in the same reign Parliament began to lose its powers because of the delegation of its powers to the Lords of the Articles. In addition there never had been passed any law which forbade the levying of taxation without the consent of Parliament. In any case an abstract principle could no longer hope to bind the crown when it was obvious that it could no longer "live of its own", and other assistance was required. Under James a change in the constitution was called for. The practice had grown up before him of summoning, not a full meeting of the Estates, the Parliament, but a general council, a Convention; that is to say members were summoned by personal letter so that those who were likely to prove obnoxious were simply ignored. In this way subsidies had been granted whenever the need arose. (2) James indeed contended that there was no need to summon the full Estates for consent to taxation at all, but his frequent demands were becoming so irritating to the people and causing them so much hardship, that Parliament was disposed to challenge his reading of the constitution. There is no doubt also that the influence of English constitutional practice was tending in the same direction. In other words

(1) Rait, Scottish Parliaments, p. 480.

(2) Hannay, Building of Parlt. Ho., Old Ed. Club, Vol. XII.

James' poverty and his maladministration of public finance had forced the issue and brought the king and Parliament into conflict over taxation. That the question was becoming acute in 1587 is obvious from an official memorandum drawn up in that year for the king's guidance. (1) The gist of the document is as follows;- In regard to taxation two things are to be considered, first when they should be granted, and second how they should be "upliftit". "I find na resolute conclusioun nor suretie quhilk may bind the prince in this point, first for "ut nunc sunt mores" and notwithstanding whatsumevir statut can be maid, "the prince will appoint taxations" sa oft as he pleases upon cullouret causes zit gif ony thing sall mend this heid <sup>an</sup> ordinance to be maid that na taxatioun sall be imponit upon the lieges without the special avise of the three Estaitis". The national opposition to this contention, and to the heavy taxation that was imposed as a result of it was the cause of the petition of the smaller barons in 1599, (2) which, although framed as a petition was in reality a demand. They mentioned, among other abuses the universal poverty of the king, the Kirk and the whole country, and ask that a way be found whereby the "exorbitant taxatiouns may be forborne and the king's ordinar expenses brocht to be borne upon his awin". The memorandum continues to discuss the amount that may be levied. In regard

(1) Supp. Parlt. Papers, 36, Vol. 1, MSS. Reg. House.

(2) do. 48, do. do.



to crown lands the question was easily solved, because "for the maist part" it "is all extentit", but there were difficulties with the church lands, where the abuse was committed of the prelates imposing such taxation as they pleased in their own court. (This was because in the reigns of James V<sup>and Mary</sup> the prelates of the period had set their lands in feu at very small rents and for a lump sum.<sup>(2)</sup> In James' reign (1) the prelates had to call upon their tenants to help them to meet the royal taxation. Nor had their ~~lands~~ <sup>benefices</sup> been assessed since ~~Bagimont's~~ <sup>Bagimont's</sup> Roll.) The same fault was observed with the burghs who "never pay ane penny out of thare awin purs". It is evident that James, convinced of his right to levy taxes without consent of Parliament, was about to formulate some scheme whereby church lands would be forced to pay a more equitable share, but, to allay discontent as far as was possible, steps were to be taken to prevent the burghs and the freeholders from assessing their tenants 'at their pleasure'. "Ane provision" was to be made in favour of "the labourers of the ground."

There is no doubt that James was, even while only king of Scotland, anxious to have absolute control over taxation, and would have put the whole system on a proper footing if only he had been strong enough. Parliament, however, had to be faced, and as the reign proceeded the opposition to his schemes became more and more determined. In 1599 he appealed for money to raise an army to protect his claim to England, and he

(1) Sc. Hist. Review, Vol. XVI, No. 61, Article by Prof. Hannay, p. 54.

(2) The confirmation of feu-charters of kirk lands was a regular part of the policy of the reign. The compositions helped to add to the revenue. Ibid. p. 60-61.



apologetically commenced his harangue by declaring his objection to any offensive scheme of taxation, and proposed that a certain sum be levied on every head of sheep and cattle in the country. His appeal met with a blunt refusal, and he accordingly proposed a fresh scheme which would prevent the burden falling upon the shoulders of the poor, but this also was refused, and he abandoned the whole idea.

(1) In 1600 he again proposed a tax for the purpose of sending ambassadors to foreign countries and <sup>to</sup> raise an army for the same purpose, but although the nobility were in favour of it, having been talked over by the king, the others refused, and it was pointed out that the country was so poor that not one could be mad enough to believe that it could ever raise sufficient to maintain an army large enough to conquer England. The burghs offered him £40,000 instead of the 40,000 crowns asked for, and that only on condition that nevr<sup>e</sup> again in his reign would they be asked for money. They insisted also that none of it should go to the courtiers. James, not unnaturally refused this offer, and he was further angered by the speech of the Earl of Gowrie, who told him that it was dishonourable to make the request because, since it must be refused, the whole world became aware of how little the poor country could give its prince. (2) James' rebuff greatly delighted the people, for taxation was so unpopular that "the word of one further was sufficient to stir up a

(1) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 275.  
 (2) do. p. 283.

commotion" (1)

The following table shows how frequently and heavily James had taxed the country:-

1578	10,000 merks.
1581	£40,000.
1583	£20,000.
1586	£15,000.
1588	£100,000.
1594	£100,000.
1597	200,000 merks. (2)

When it is remembered that in addition to all these causes of poverty, James had to contend with a steady rise in the general level of prices, due largely to his own currency policy, we can sympathise with his plaint in Basilicon Doron. It has quite a modern ring; "Prices ever rise, never fall, being as constant in that their evil custom, as if it were a settled law for them". (3)

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 8, p. 485.

(2) Acts, III, 108; III, 189-190, 192; III, 328-9; III, 424-6; III, 523-4; IV, 50-52; IV, 142-6.

(3) Bas. Dor., Bk. 2, p. 163.

## Chapter II.

### James VI's Poverty Illustrated.

- (1) Analysis of the Accounts of the Comptroller and Treasurer. The 'superexpenses'.
- (2) The worries of the finance officials.
- (3) The Royal Household. The Schemes of 1582 and 1591.
- (4) James' marriage. Money an important factor in the choice of the bride. Methods adopted to raise money for the marriage. Increase in expenditure as a result of the marriage. Expenses of the baptisms and how met.
- (5) Begging letters.
- (6) The king's debts. Complicated borrowings. Heriot, Foulis, Acheson, Arnot and others.



## Chapter II. James VI's Poverty Illustrated.

---

"James had no resource but France". (Teulet, Vol. 2, p. 560).

---

It is difficult to believe Fontenay when he writes to Nau that he was surprised to find that James was ignorant of his poverty! (1) He may not have known how poor he really was in comparison with his fellow monarchs, but there can be no doubt whatever that his own everlasting poverty was repeatedly brought home to him; he could hardly have remained in ignorance of the character of his household accounts as drawn up by the Comptroller. They make most melancholy reading.

In 1569 the Comptroller's receipts, not counting those in kind amounted to.....£12,141. (2)

From this sum was deducted as a first charge the comptroller's superexpenses .....£13,173.

This means that before any household expenses were met, the king was already in debt to the amount of £1,000, and every penny paid out came from the Comptroller's own resources--the household was being maintained at the expense of an official. A long list of expenses followed, including those of Queen Mary at Lochleven, over £1,000, those of the regent, nearly £4,500, and the king's modestly appear as £686. The account ended with the Comptroller's statement "et sic

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 7, 15th Aug., 1584.

(2) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 20. p. 1.

superexpendit ..... £13,971."

It is to be noted that the king's debt to the Comptroller has increased , and that the deficit is more than £1,000 above the total receipts.

For 1573 the money receipts were .....£10,182  
but there had to be deducted as a first charge the super-  
expenses incurred in the last account.....£11,533,  
and so the accounts, after allowing for other payments, *end*  
with a deficit of £7,261, a substantial improvement, but  
still a sign of bad financial management. (1)

In 1574 with receipts of .....£18,932,  
and superexpenses from the last account ....£7,261,  
the new deficit is only .....£1,433. (2)

For 1588 the receipts had risen to .....£28,466,  
made up chiefly from the following sources:-

Sheriffs etc.....	£414.
Baillies of Burghs.....	£717 <sup>re</sup>
Customs.....	£4,000.
Mailis .....	£11,898.
Garsum and Entres Silver .....	£6,344.

The total expenditure for the same period amounted to  
£27,951,

including

Food for the household.....	£16,149.
Brown bread and oatcakes .....	£234.
Unpaid accounts.....	£2,610.
Banquet at Huntly's marriage ...	£1,749.
Stable expenses .....	£3,512.
Household fees .....	£2,416.

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 20, p. 113.

(2) do. do. p. 143.

By selling some of his receipts in kind the Comptroller actually had a balance of .....£9,096,  
but unfortunately the king thought this an excuse for exercising his fatal generosity, and his gifts from the feudal revenues and other sources of revenue amounted to  
£15,685,

and so the accounts end with James in debt to the Comptroller to the amount of .....£6,589.

It is to be noted that James gave away as much as would nearly have paid for the food for the household for one year. (1)

For 1589 out of a total charge of .....£24,790,  
the household accounts came to .....£16,068,  
the stable accounts to .....£4,828, and  
the superexpenses amounted only to .....£2,188.

This is a smaller amount than usual, but the Comptroller had been successful in obtaining from James, before his account was presented, £5,533. James was an enthusiastic hunter, and we see that the stable accounts are out of all proportion both to the revenue and the cost of maintaining the household. (2)

In 1591 the charge had increased to ....£70,085,  
but the expenses had also increased,

Superexpenses from the last account were £12,523,  
Household and Stable accounts were.....£47,493.  
Interest on borrowed money was paid  
to Thomas Foulis.....£133,  
and to John Sharp, Advocate.....£66,

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 21, p. 321.

(2) do. Vol. 22 p. 17.



so that the year ended with a deficit of £8,294, which sum, the auditors decreed, must be paid to the Comptroller before proceedings could be taken against him for the payment of any debts for which he had taken allowance in his account. Evidently he was nearing the end of his resources, and could not continue to meet the king's debts indefinitely. (1)

In 1592 the household and stable accounts showed a slight decrease, and the deficit was under £1,000; some improvement then took place, and there was actually a balance on the right side of £700 in 1594, a small deficit of just over £100 in 1595, and a balance of over £900 in 1596. In 1598, however, the deficit was over £3,000, in 1599 over £26,000, in 1601 nearly £18,000, and in 1602 over £25,000. (2)

From the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer we get a similar picture.

The receipts for the period 1st July, 1567 to 1st July, 1568 were .....£5,189.  
the discharge .....£10,324.  
leaving a deficit of .....£5,135. (3)

Ruthven's accounts for 1st June, 1574 covering the period from 1st July, 1571 show receipts of ....£29,461.  
and a deficit of ....£61,032. (4)

This account contains the statement that the Treasurer had no money wherewith to pay the king's debts, and had been forced to resort to the regent's credit for £57,510, leaving

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 22, p. 177. (2) Ibid. pp. 237, 408;  
Vol. 23 pp. 65, 109, 293.  
(3) Treasurer's Accs. MSS. Reg. Ho., Feb., 14th 1567/8  
(4) do. do. June, 1st, 1574.

the Treasurer to find a deficit of about .....£3,500. (1)  
 In January, 1580/1 the deficit was .....£35,887.(2)  
 For the period 1st January, 1580/1 to 1st March, 1581/2,  
 Gowrie had receipts of £35,663, but his deficit was £45,376,  
 and he had been compelled to borrow 40,000 merks on the  
 security of his own lands, being allowed interest, £2,666. (3)  
 From March 1st, 1581/2 till May 1st, 1583, his charge was  
 £33,559, his discharge, £101,048, his deficit.....£67,488,  
 but of this amount £14,342 was owing to Sir Robert Melville,  
 and £5,082 to Achesoune, Master Coiner, leaving a final  
 deficit of £48,063. It was found necessary to accord to the  
 Treasurer protection against his creditors until his super-  
 expenses were paid. (4) Evidently the Treasurer was getting  
 into grave pecuniary difficulties in his endeavour to carry  
 on the work of the state.(x)

Melville's accpunt for the year 1st May, 1585 to 1586  
 shows a deficit of £34,566, with the charge £42,840, even  
 after James had relieved him by a gift of £5,000. (5) For  
 the next year the charge appears as .....£19,083,  
 and the deficit was .....£49,791,  
 and again James had to place the Treasurer under royal  
 protection until his superexpenses had been paid. (6)

- (1) Treasurer's Accs., 1st June, 1574.
- (2) do. 1st Jany., 1580/1.
- (3) do. 1st Mar., 1581/2.
- (4) do. 1st May, 1583.
- (5) do. 4th June, 1586.
- (6) do. 15th Aug., 1587.

(x)

For the year 1583-4 Montrose's charge was £55,331 and his  
 superexpenses £24,773. Misc. Exr. Papers, Vol. 1, "Superexpenses"



For the year 1st May, 1587 to 1st May, 1588, Melville's expenditure was so heavy that after being paid his deficit of £49,791, he showed a new deficit of .....£50,568. (1)

Two years later with receipts of £106,861 the deficit was much less, considering that the account covered two years being .....£35,673. (2)

In the next two accounts the discharge exceeded the charge by £35,686, and £23,446. (3)

Blantyre, the new Treasurer, was unable to improve on Melville's performance: for the period 17th March, 1595/6 to 7th August, 1597 his deficit was .....£12,521, with receipts amounting to £72,439. The merchants, officers and servants to whom the £12,521 was owing had not received anything, because, evidently, Blantyre had reached the end of his resources early in his career as Treasurer, and he was exonerated from paying them, it being admitted that the burden lay on the king. (4) For the year ending 1st January 1598/9, his deficit was .....£27,602. (5)

Elphinstone succeeded to the burdens of office, and his first two accounts show deficits of £39,268 and £51,992, while for the few months from June to September 1601 he was out of pocket to the amount of £14,8<sup>9</sup>~~8~~9. (6) Sir George Home's deficit from October, 1601 to January, 1604 was £99,373. (7).

(1) Treasurer's Accs., 11th Septr., 1588.

(2) do., 16th Febr., 1590/1.

(3) do., 12th Febr., 1593/4, 30th July, 1597.

(4) do., 6th Aug., 1597. (5) 27th Jany., 1598/9. Misc. Ex. P., Vol. I

(6) do., 5th July, 1600, 27th June, 1601.

(7) do., 6th Jany., 1604.

"Superexpenses"



As will be seen later the Accounts of the Cunzie House run on practically the same lines. (1)

These accounts ~~being a most consistent record~~<sup>are</sup>, a most consistent record of how an inadequate revenue was hopelessly attempting to meet the increasingly heavy expenditure,<sup>and</sup> provide a most graphic picture of the poverty of the government, but, in addition, they prove that to be an official entrusted with the administration of the royal revenues was to court most certainly an enormous amount of worry, and possibly financial disaster. One is apt to wonder how it was possible under such circumstances for James to find men willing to take office under him; it may be that here we have the explanation of the stories current at the time that these officials robbed the king whenever an opportunity offered. Such action certainly seems to be the only method by which they could recover their "superexpenses". In any case the records furnish sufficient illustrations of their trials and worries.

Take the case of Sir William Murray of Tullibardine, Comptroller. In 1579 we find him complaining to the Privy Council (2) that he found it impossible to provide the royal household with wines in spite of the powers given him by the law to search ships and houses for them, and to uplift them at a reasonable price after tasting them. Some people had the temerity to refuse to open their cellars, whilst others, although they permitted their wines to be tasted, would not

(1) See page 93

(2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 2,<sup>3</sup> 18th March, 1579. 117.

part with them without immediate payment or a satisfactory guarantee that the king would pay. The king's poverty was well known to his subjects! The result, continues the complaint, was that James could have no wine that year, "nor in any time coming". Even when the Provost and Baillies were appealed to, they refused to assist the poor Comptroller, saying that they could not force any man to part with his property "without assurance for payment thereof".

The king's extravagance to his friends caused much distress to Lord Ruthven, who complained to the Council that his superexpenses of nearly £36,000 were caused by his being ordered to pay away large sums of money to the courtiers. The Council agreed that it was hard that he should be in difficulties through the fault of the king, but the only relief that could be granted him was the promise that his superexpenses would be refunded as soon as possible out of the king's own "gear". (1)

Sir George Home suffered badly too. On his appointment to the Comptrollership in 1598 he contracted to furnish the household out of the revenues, and received a promise from the king that his superexpenses would be always paid. James knew how to drive a bargain, while Home must have been a most sanguine individual. Very soon the revenues were exhausted, and he had to spend £26,000 of his own money; he then confessed that he was unable to pay the officers of the household sufficient to enable them to carry out their duties. He had failed to carry out his contract, and was summoned to

(1) Reg. P. C.; Vol. 3, 9th Jany., 1581. h.340.



appear before the Privy Council; no defence was admitted, not even the plea that the English annuity had not been paid over to him as it ought to have been, owing to the interference of the king. When he attempted to make the judges understand that he had lost heavily owing to the changes in the currency, he was simply told that he had broken his bond, and was ordered to fulfil his bargain, taking what consolation he could out of a promise "in verbo principis" that his debts would be paid. (1)

Usually, it seems, the Comptroller, when revenue failed, used his own money, but it sometimes happened as in Home's case, that this was impossible, and then the plight of the officers in charge of the various departments of the household was serious indeed. For example, in 1599, James was in such desperate straits that he was compelled to declare that he must rely on the benevolence of his subjects, and the poor officials had to raise money on their own credit to feed the royal family of Scotland. By September they had thus spent £11,000, not a penny of which had come from the Comptroller. Their creditors began to press them for payment, to "their utter wrack and undoing", and to make matters worse the Comptroller demitted office. In these circumstances the Privy Council found it extremely difficult to give a decision fair to all the parties concerned, and they probably did the best they could, when they decreed that the flesher, coalman and fishman should get a decree for £8,000,

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, 9th. Feby., 1599. p. 52b.



for which the king was debtor, and for the balance they were to sue the late Comptroller. (1) But on reflection we see that all the Council had done was to shift the burden of the debt on to a different set of people, and the chances of the tradesmen getting payment were as remote as the decision against the Comptroller was unjust.

In justice to James it should be noted that he always professed great willingness to look after the welfare of any of his servants who had been run into debt for his sake. There is the case of Walter, Prior of Blantyre, one of the Treasurers who had suffered badly through the delay in the refunding of his "superexpenses". As late as 1600 he had not been fully repaid, and the king was in his debt for £18,000, much of which he had himself borrowed. James, in the words of the Privy Council Records, being careful of his relief, as he always had been of those who served him, promised him on the word of a prince, that, whenever he could discover any casualty sufficient for the purpose, the debt would be repaid. (2) That this meant very little is obvious, and in 1603 he was still waiting for payment, receiving the promise of 11,000 merks from the English gratuity.

Treasurer Elphinstone demitted office in 1601 with heavy superexpenses, £41,000, and in order to afford him some relief, the profits of the Mint were assigned to him and

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 6, 8th Sept. 1599, h. 26.  
 (2) do. do. 16th Febr., 1601.  
 do. do. 11th March, 1600. h. 92.

his son, but the latter had to undertake to pay the £5,000 due every year by the king to the tacksmen of the Mint. One third of the spurious coins received was to be given to the son, another third to the Treasurer, and the remainder to the informer. (1) We find on reference to the Accounts of the Cunzie House that in 1601 the Mint made a profit of £25,233-15-4d which sum was wholly given over to the two Elphinstones in part payment of the superexpenses, (2) but a new tack then came into force, and in the last account of the period there is no record of the debt being cancelled. (3)

The Mint was also called upon to help to pay part of Sir Robert Melville's superexpenses, (4) and in 1590 he also received a grant of the crown dues from the lands of Dame Balfour of Burlie, the wardship of the heir, and the casualty of the heir. (5) According to Spottiswoode, Melville and Glamis were guilty of peculation, and were glad to resign to Lord Blantyre to obtain a "quietus est", but as a matter of fact Melville had suffered badly. A contract was drawn up in 1595, subscribed by the king, Sir Robert and Blantyre, in which the king admitted a debt of 5,000 merks; he was to receive 2,000 at once and the balance was to be paid within a year. Further, the king undertook to pay £20,000 which Melville had borrowed on the king's behalf from Robert

(1) Fraser, Elphinstone Book, Vol. 1, p. 137.

(2) Accs., Cunzie House, 28th Octr., 1601-29th Novr., 1601.

(3) do. 10th Decr., 1602 -23rd Aug., 1604.

(4) Reg. P. C." Vol. 4, p. 470. 14th Mar., 1590.

(5) Fraser, Melville Book, Vol. 1, p. 114.

Jowsie. (1) Unfortunately James failed to pay Jowsie, and an act had to be passed in 1597 giving Melville protection against his creditors. Three years later the debt was still unpaid. (2)

In these circumstances there must have been few like the Earl of Cassilis who deliberately sought the appointment of Treasurer. This young nobleman found himself elevated to the office -- it seems to have been purchased for him by his elderly and ambitious wife, but in a few weeks the pair had good reason to repent. He resigned because of the constant demands made on his own purse, and because he was told that the king had gleefully said that his lady's purse would soon be opened for her rose nobles. His short period of office had cost him 40,000 merks. (3)

So poor was James that it was difficult to provide the royal household with the necessities of life, and attempts were made on several occasions to cut down expenses with a view to the reduction of the ever-growing debt. The records of these schemes admit the poverty and provide further illustration of it. In 1582 a scheme was drawn up for the "ordering and provision of the king's household"; it was proposed by the Privy Council and approved by the king. The preamble refers to the "sundry disorders and abuses" in the household and in "the collection and distribution of

(1) Spottis. p. 413; Fraser, Melville Bk., Vol. 3, p. 140-1.

(2) Fraser, Melville Bk., p. 121. Vol. I.

(3) do. Elphinstone Bk., Vol. 1, p. 125. Tytler, 4, 271.





the king's rents". The king had ordained the advisers to "make the form of the household and stable having respect to the order of the house of James V, and the possibility of your majesty's rents", to discover a remedy for the evils and a means of paying the superexpenses of the royal officers. The scheme begins with a list of servants required for the king; two Masters of the Household, two Masters of the Stable, a Master of the Gardrobe, a Clerk of the Expenses, and so on through Gentlemen of the Chalmer down to the meanest servant in the kitchen, in all about one hundred. There follows the year's rations of food: etc.:-

Wheat	24 chalders
Beer	50 do.
Beef	£584.
Mutton	£1,802.
Veal	£1,109.
Cunnyngis (rabbits)	"unbocht".
Capons	£182, because the king has some of his own.
Poultry	£413.
Wild meat	£1,000.
Fresh fish	£1,186.
Hard fish	£200.
Wine, 30 tuns	£2,000.
Butter	£168.
Wax	£333.
Candles	£200.
Coals	£660.
Oatcakes	£133.
Napery	£200.
"Coppis and stuppis"	£30.
Horse food	£170.
Straw	£549.
Stable candles	£13.
Carriage	£333.
Horse shoes	£133.
Extras	£30.

The total sum allowed under this heading is about £11,500.

Then comes a list of the fees for the servants:-

(a) Lower servants:-

Lavendar to James, fee, her servants and 'saip' £200.

Lavendar to the court	£100.
James Lauder, musician	£100.
"Ather of the tua ministeris"	£200.
Averyman (live stock attendant)	£120.
And a number of others bringing the sum to	<u>£16,90.</u>

(b) Higher servants;-

2 Masters of the Household	£266.
2 Masters of the Stable, Master of the Gardrobe etc.	£1,333.
Clerk of Expenses, Master of the Wine Cellar, Master Cook etc.	£400.
Ushers, Writer of the Comptis etc.	£333.
A Porter	£66.
Aids, Keepers of the Great Larder and Petty Larder, Keeper of the Tapestry, Master Cook, Master Baxter, Comptroller's Clerk, Tailor etc.	£1,100.
Valets, Gentlemen of the Chalmer etc.	£830.
Total under this heading	<u>£4,330.</u>

(c) "Beside thair is to be payit be the Comptroller for the feis of the officiaries of the Estaitis and Chekker;-"

Comptroller	£333.
Clerk of the Register	£23.
Justice Clerk	£13.
"Dytair of the Rollis"	£13.
Lyon Herald	£40.
Heralds	£120.
Pursuivants	£60.
Macers	£40.
Keeper of Edinburgh Castle	£800.

It is unfortunate that a number of officers have no salary placed opposite them, but, as far as the scheme makes out, the total under this head comes to about £1,450.

The next division deals with the amount required for the 'liveray claithis' for the household. For the two Masters of the Household £200 is required, and the scheme gives full details down to the meanest in the kitchen who receive under this heading £3-6-8. The total is £2,440.

Next comes the estimated revenue from the rents, £14,805, and the victuals are all very carefully reckoned up, deducting

the amount that can be sold. For example there should come in 59 chalders, 3 bolls of wheat, but as the house only requires 24 chalders, 35 chalders, 3 bolls can be sold at £1,609-15. The total estimated revenue from this source is £7,750. The total revenue thus comes to £22,559, and as the total estimated cost is about £21,400, this scheme, if it were rigidly adhered to, would set the domestic expenditure of the king upon a business footing.

In addition the document relates how Tullibardine, Comptroller, is superexpendit to the amount of £10,500 "or theirby", and has also taken upon himself the furnishing of the house for November, a month after the date of his compt, and there is also owing £2,200 for the stable. For his relief, therefore, <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ assigned the Martinmas Mailis, £5,000, and other revenues. The Bishop of Moray is to supervise the selling of superfluous victuals. This arrangement makes it impossible for the new Comptroller to furnish the house on the rents, and so £10,000 is to be voted for the present year. The compts were to be "nichtlie hard eftir supper", and the Bishop is to take pains to hear them. There were to be three fish days in the week, all tables were to be held in the one hall, no additional servants were to be employed, and an inventory of "sic plenissing as burde chaires" was to be made. (1)

(1) Scheme of the Royal Household, 1582, MSS. Register House,



~~it was to be paid for in ready money.~~ (1) These decisions, however, were a counsel of perfection: the household was still impoverished, the Comptroller still recording large deficits. In 1591 the Privy Council again considered the matter, spending a fortnight in discussion, but so hopeless was the task that it was almost given up "to the king's no small grief". It was decided in the end that the household must be maintained on a sum of 20,000 merks to be paid by the Isles, and, in addition, the imposts on wines <sup>and</sup> the customs. It was also laid down that the king must revoke all grants. (2) As no real help had been rendered, the king continued to appeal to his advisers, and the Lords of the Exchequer replied that in their opinion the revenue could be greatly increased by the reduction of the feus and the questionable rights by which certain subjects held the royal parks. It was monstrous, they said, that James should be forced to buy hay and straw for his horses when his parks could easily raise all that was necessary. Falkland alone could support 140. The Laird of Balvaird must be evicted from Holyrood, and the parks plenished with sheep, and if James could not buy the stock then it could be borrowed or taken in the form of escheats. But what James needed was not advice so much as practical help; he had probably seen the

-----  
 (1) ~~Scheme of the Royal Household MSS. now in the Livingstone~~  
 Guide, pp. 36.

(2) Hist. Mss., Salisbury, Part 4, p. 91. The need of adding to the revenue was one reason for the expedition to the Western Isles.

remedy long ago, and he pathetically implored his advisers to come down to the Palace in person, and assist him to find some way out of his difficulties. Notwithstanding this, "na tryst or dayet is kept", as he complained, and so pressing was his need of money that he resolved to approach the baillies of the capital and compel them, if they would not volunteer, to lend him something. These worthy citizens, however, seem to have been warned, for they escaped by the west port, and James had to wait with what patience he could muster the coming of his advisers. That they were in no great hurry to tackle the question of the finances of the household was probably due to their conviction that their labours would be in vain. Certainly they were sincere in their attempt; drastic economy was insisted on as the first essential, and expenditure was mercilessly cut down: even James' wine allowance suffered, and he was not even allowed a quart "to his afternoon, and one pint after collation"; the heavy expenditure in dress for the king and queen was condemned-- "no rents in Scotland could stand" such extravagance. The allowance to the Master of the Household was also reduced, but this was too much for Andrew Melville, the Master in question. He angrily protested that, as it was, serving the king meant "continually querrelling and flyting, and every day subject to the king's displeasure for the faults of other people", and serve without his proper fees he would not. From his statement it appears that those dining at his table had not enough meat, and neither bread nor drink, while



those under him had only bread and drink. Frequent riots took place among the servants when food was scarce, and much shameful and dishonest reiving of meat betwixt the kitchen and the tables". On many occasions the guards had to be called out to quell the disturbances. Lastly the servants were not regularly paid. (1)

The immediate result of the investigation was good, for not only do the accounts for the year show a reduction, but the deficit was actually under £1,000. (2) On the other hand a few years later there was a return to the old conditions, and at the time when the deficit was over £26,000, in 1599, the financial officers presented a memorial in which they appealed for money, which was urgently needed for "the king's bairns gotten and to be begotten", for renewing all his moveables and silver work, which was all worn and consumed, and for repairs to his palaces and castles, which were in shameful decay and in some cases wholly in ruins. (3)

Towards the end of our period it was found necessary (4) to reduce the number of servants in the household to the number employed before the king's marriage in order that these few might receive their wages promptly. But never until he was seated on the English throne did James know what it was to experience the comforts, far less the luxury that we are apt to associate with kings. The picture outlined above is indeed a striking illustration of a poverty-stricken monarch.

(1) Purves, Revenue of Sc. Cr., p. xxxvi.

(2) See p. 43. (3) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 271.

(4) Reg. P. C., Vol. 6, 16th Febr., p. 1601. When he left Scotland

£10,000 was ordered to be distributed among his domestics who were in arrears. Reg. P. C., Vol. 6, 602.



### The Marriage.

While this poverty was vexing enough to a bachelor, it was much more serious when the king married, and it was then that his lack of means came home to him more pointedly.

Finance, it should be noted, plays a most important part in James' matrimonial history, even from the first occasion on which the question came up. In the choice of a wife, says James to his son, regard must be paid to "beauty, riches and friendship by alliance", but in James' own case riches came first. (1) When his Council began to discuss the future wife, there was drawn up, to guide it, a most peculiar document which lays down that he must marry, and that the marriage must bring profit to the country. The bride must be that one who would bring the greatest profit to Scotland, and there was laid before the counsellors a list of the eligible ladies, beginning with the Princess of Navarre, recommended by Elizabeth. Her marriage portion consisted partly of a large sum of ready money, and partly of a large annual income, which would be much better than that of the Danish princess, whose dowry consisted merely of ready money. This they admit would be spent almost at once, but with an annual income the king's poverty would be permanently relieved, and indeed <sup>e</sup>they thought that some might even be saved. Moreover the King of Navarre had at that time no children, and therefore on his death the bride would succeed to a fortune estimated to be 1,300,000 li.

(1) Bas. Dor., Book 2, p. 171.

Tournois a year. In addition, and this appealed to the barons, this marriage would mean a renewal of the ancient alliance with France, and so king, nobles and subjects would obtain inestimable benefits. In proof of this it was urged that the Lord of Lorraine had married a sister of the King of France, and he had obtained great gifts of ready money and benefices and estates for himself and his barons. Such benefits could not be expected from the Danish marriage, and therefore it was advised that James should marry with Navarre. (1)

Later it became known that the King of Navarre had "made bold" with his sister's fortune, but even then it was argued that the King of Navarre might live to be King of France, and ~~if~~ if he died before then, his sister would get 400,000 crowns. Some said that in any case she was the better wife being a "wyse stayd woman", who would correct his careless ways; the other, being but a child, would not only exercise no control, but would herself need some discreet wise ladies to advise her. (2) But "the bird in the hand" was the motto, and, as it was thought that there was a better chance of profit if he married Anne of Denmark, negotiations were opened with that country. (3) How disgusted James must have been with such discussions! His personal feelings went for nought, and as he wrote to Elizabeth, "the nobles of my country want to sell me like a bullock to the highest bidder", (4) whereas he did not wish to be thought "a merchant for his wife". (5)

- (1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, No. 568. (2) Vol. 10, p. 82, 95.  
 (3) do. Vol. 9, 8th Feby., 1589.  
 (4) Cal. S. P., Sp., Vol. 2, No. 558.  
 (5) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p. 136.



The next step was to arrange for the sending of the ambassadors to Denmark, but there was so little in the Treasury that a <sup>sp</sup>pecial tax was necessary, and even then so urgent was the need for money that James had to ask the Commissioners of the Burghs to lend him £4,000, to be repaid out of the tax still to be voted by the Estates. (1) ~~But even~~ <sup>Nevertheless</sup> ~~the~~ the ambassadors had to meet their own expenses, and so much did the Laird of Barnbarroch spend on this service that his family suffered severely, and his descendants complained as late as 1702 that no attempt had been made to repay the money. (2) The instructions given to the Earl Marischal, ~~James~~ Keith, who was in command of the embassy, show the spirit in which the marriage was regarded; he was to demand first £1,000,000 Sc. to be paid in a lump sum and delivered as soon as the marriage was completed. As it was most probable that the King of Denmark would "cast off" James' proposed settlement on Anne on account of its meanness, he was to promise the life-rent of one third of the king's property; but if the value of this was asked for, Keith was ~~was~~ warned "to spare always to value it in any sort". We are not surprised to read that these conditions were thought "a little strange". (3) One of the ambassadors was sent back to say that James must accept Anne with such provision as her father, the late king, had settled on her, 70,000 dollars, and that "Kings should marry for love and alliance and not expect sums of money". (4) Navarre, being

- (1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, <sup>h. 231, 28th Nov. 1587.</sup> ~~24th Dec. 1588.~~  
(2) Fraser, Cromarty Bk., Vol. 1, p. 170.  
(3) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 3, p. 421-6.  
(4) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p. 126.



lost, there was nothing else to do than to send the messenger back with instructions to accept whatever was offered. (1) Probably the report of Anne's wealth helped to reconcile James to the smaller dowry, for he was told that all her preparations were made and all so costly "as is strange to hear"; one of her coaches had no iron in it but was all of silver. (2) And there is some evidence that James knew all along that his terms were impossibly high, but they served the purpose of postponing the arrival of the bride until such time as his preparations were complete. (3) The Danes, however, were asked to sign a bond promising to repay what James settled on her should she die within a year. (4)

So difficult was it to find anything to settle on Anne, that James gave her a grant of certain lands near Musselburgh, but it transpired that John, Master of Thirlestane, the son of the Chancellor had received a grant of the same lands. Litigation followed, and Thirlestane won his case! (5)

When everything was decided, James was plunged into despair; he began to wonder what his bride would think of his poverty and his inability to supply her with the comforts he thought she would expect. The opinion commonly held was that he was far too poor to support a wife, and that in fact he had no right to think of marriage in his abject poverty. The following extracts from contemporary observers show that

- (1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p. 132. (2) p. 124.  
 (3) do. do. p. 123. (4) p. 148.  
 (5) Fraser, Elphinstone Bk. Vol. 1, p. xlvi.

his poverty was a by-word at this time;-

"He is not able to live like a king. He borrows often of his towns and never pays. He takes taxes, alias subsidies, every year for three or four years past. He hath neither plate nor stuff to furnish 'ane little halfe bult howse". His plate is not worth £100, and he has only two or three rich jewels. His saddles are of plain cloth. He eats but of two dishes, no bread but of oats, and cares not what apparel. If an escheat fall, the first that bags it hath it". (1) "His majesty lacks horses, and takes it unkindly that the queen, Elizabeth, will send him none for hunting. He has to borrow from his servants." (2) "He is repairing and augmenting his house at Edinburgh, but other provision there is none; all spoiled and decayed." (3) "The young queen is ready to be sent hither before the king's wedding apparel be here made, or any house repaired to receive her". (4) "Surely Scotland was never in a worse state to receive a queen.....neither a house in repair but all most ruinous and want furniture. The time is short and his defect cannot be helped if she come before winter." (5) "A young king so facile and in want, a nobility factious and thirsting for the blood of one another and inconstant, the church spoiled and the ministers overwhelmed with poverty, the burghs loath to contribute to the king's necessity doth show this state to be in such misery as "ipsa si cupiat salus servare

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p.19, (2) p. 102. (3) p. 115.

(4) p. 122. (5) p. 137.

non potest hoc regnum". (1) "There is no provision for the marriage, nor the wherewithal to make any. The last tax, all that can be gotten, is gone, and the king is driven to seek money". (2) There was nothing else for it but to beg.

Colville was sent on a mission to Elizabeth to appeal to her to provide him with money, clothes and plate, and she replied that she would answer for £2,000 and no more. (3) The money was spent on plate, and the long list of the articles bought, covers, pots, flagons, spoons, cruets, lavers and candlesticks, shows how utterly destitute was the Palace, and how little the Keeper of the Vessels had to do. (4)

James.

He then commenced to write a series of letters to his wealthy friends, and in the art of writing such letters he was very proficient through long practice. Barnbarroch was appealed to send "as much meat as possibly you may provide and furnish of your own or by your moyen". (5) Boswell of Balmain<sup>u</sup> was asked for the loan of 1,000 merks, and to him James said he was sure that the Laird would rather hurt himself than see the dishonour of his prince and native land. (6) Even when the Danish ambassadors departed for home, he was again forced to borrow in order that he might present them with a massive

- (1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p. 137. (2) p. 1<sup>3</sup>22.  
 (3) Hist. MSS, Salisbury, Part 3, p. 272, 430.  
 (4) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p. 160-2.  
 (5) (6) Chambers, Annals, Vol. 1, p. 193.



gold chain as a parting gift, and when he was impatiently awaiting the arrival of the queen, he was still engaged in considering ways and means. The burghs voted him £20,000 to meet the expenses of the queen's suite in addition to his "toquheir" of £100,000, (1) but so desperate was he that he could not wait till the money was collected, declaring that "there mon be present reddy silver to deburs for the bying, outredding and furnissing of sic things as of necessitie mon be had". An immediate payment, he said, would greatly advance his honour and otherwise render him great service and pleasure, that he would never be able to forget it, and so he was compelled to burden the nation with immediate payment. (2) When we see how the money was spent we realise how truly distressing was the royal poverty. Much of it went to repair the Palace, chairs and stools were cushioned, blankets and mattresses were provided, feather beds and tablecloths were purchased, six pages and four lackeys received new cloaks and hats, and the ministers obtained complete new outfits. Indeed the Palace must have provided a comparatively prosperous appearance when James returned from his wedding tour. (3)

As is well known, when the bride was storm-stayed, James himself braved the dangers of the deep and crossed to Denmark. His first idea was to send the Admiral, Earl of Bothwell, but when at a meeting of the Privy Council there

- (1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 30 Aug. 1589, p. 410.  
 (2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 12th Sept., 1589, p. 412.  
 (3) Craig, Papers, P. 13.

was presented the Admiral's estimate of the cost of the expedition, it was realised that the Exchequer could not afford it, and James was "perplexed". He was saved only by the generosity of the Chancellor, who offered to supply one ship and half of another, if his friends would do the same.

(1) Although the king was treated very hospitably in Denmark, and seems to have enjoyed his tour greatly, there are indications that in his spare moments he was still worrying about money matters, and wondering how he could raise enough money to impress his bride on their arrival. At such times he again started on a begging letter campaign. From Croneburg he wrote to the Laird of Barnbarroch, mentioning the need for securing proper housing accommodation for the Danes accompanying the queen, and expressing his own inability to meet the expense. The Laird was <sup>told</sup> ~~instructed~~ to interview the Privy Council, who would give him complete instructions as to what was expected of him, "all excuses to be set aside". (2) To the Town Council of the Capital he also wrote apportioning among the members various duties; some were to furnish houses; others were to borrow from the wealthiest citizens a quantity of the best napery for use of the Danes; a sufficient number of men, honest and decently dressed, were to meet the queen; all beggars were to be expelled from the town, and the citizens were to be careful to clean the streets in front of their houses. (3) To the

<sup>Salisbury</sup>  
 (1) Hist. MSS., Part 3, p. 438.  
 (2), (3) Craig, Papers, pp. 32, 33.



Laird of Barnbarroch he again wrote with the following appeal;- "We mon employ the guidwill of our loving subjects. ....Send sic quantities of fatt beiff and muttoun on fute, wylde fowlis and vennyson". In return he would receive a receipt from the Master of the Larder so that the king could acknowledge his goodwill "when the time came". Barnbarroch was invited to the festivities, but the thrifty James added that he was to be careful not to bring with him any great number, but "a certane of your honest servants, maist habill and of best equipage that hes na quarrel". (1) To the Privy Council he appealed to do everything that was possible, in fact "mair nor is possible" to make a good impression, for "a king of Scotland with a new marid wife will not come hame every day". He must have thought with shame and misgiving of the ruinous condition of the Palace, for they were to remember particularly "the ending out of the Abbey as yet lying in the deid-thraw". Unless something was done to it, he said, the royal pair could not stay in the Palace, because the Danes were not accustomed to lie outside because of the keenness of the frost. Then they were to send two or three ships to Denmark to accompany them home, but no great men were to come in them, for, he pathetically remarked, "I am already overchargeable to these folk here". Lastly they were not to fail to provide plenty of food and drink, for in Denmark there was abundance of good cheer. James was very

(1) Craig, Papers, Appendix 4.



clearly ashamed of his poverty, and dreaded that the Danes might sneer at their reception -- a truly pathetic position for a young monarch, who especially at such a time was very anxious to appear in a good light. (1) He did his best in Denmark to appear the generous king by giving presents to Danes, but as he usually "wanted of his awne to that necessity", he relied very largely on the Chancellor, Maitland.

(2) It was no easy <sup>thing</sup> ~~matter~~ for poor Scotland to fulfil the king's request in the matter of sending ships to escort the pair home, but it was finally decided that the burghs should find the ships. Ayr, however, was unable to perform its share, and the Commendator of Pittenweem had to rig out the ship, and collect the money from the burgh as he could. (3)

James must have been well pleased at the result of his policy because the welcome was all that could be desired, the response to his letters having been for the most part very gratifying, although the Laird of Barnbarroch had to be ordered peremptorily to send the remaining half of his subscription of £200, because those who had supervised the furnishing work were being troubled by the tradesmen, who being poor men, were in need of the money. Caldwell, too, received a command to send quickly what had been asked of him, a hackney for the use of the ladies accompanying the queen; he was told that if he did not comply with the royal request, his action

(1) Chambers, Life of Jas. VI, Vol. 1, p. 147.

(2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 15th Decr., 1589. p. 445.

(3) do. do. 18th March, 1590. p. 470.

would always be remembered against him in any of his 'adoes', and the threat was added, "We will cause the readiest ye have to be taen by our authority and brought in till us". (1) But James must have forgotten about his financial worries for the time, when he viewed the results of his importunities; the rooms of Holyrood Palace were richly hung with gold and silver tapestry, repairs to the building had been carried out, and at the banquetting over two hundred persons were entertained daily by the king and his nobles. The High Street was lined from top to bottom with tapestry, and a box of precious stones valued at 20,000 crowns was presented to the queen. However, this seeming luxury lasted too long for James' resources, and the time speedily came when he found himself unable to provide for the entertainment of the Danes, which was costing 1,200 merks a day. (2) As they could hardly be dismissed, the Laird of Wemyss was asked to come to the rescue and relieve James of this tremendous expense. (3)

James was not long in <sup>discovering</sup> ~~discovering~~ that a wife meant a great addition to the expenditure incurred in the household, and instead of finding in some miraculous way that his marriage had solved his money difficulties, he discovered that they had multiplied. One reason for this was that Anne had brought with her a suite of Danish servants, and they had to be fed and paid somehow. As it was impossible to increase the funds

(1) ~~Moysie, Memoirs~~ Chambers, Annals, Vol. 1, p. 201.

(2) Chambers, Annals, Vol. 1, p. 28. 198.

(3) Fraser, Wemyss Book, Vol. 3, p. 28-29.



available for the Comptroller, drastic economy had to be introduced, for if not, then the king and queen were likely to suffer real hardship. Accordingly the charge under this head which had amounted to £2,024 was reduced to £1,200, and instead of the money being paid to these servants direct, it was paid over to the Master of the Household, who was thus forced to observe the strictest vigilance over his department to prevent any waste. (1) Another reason for the increased expenditure was that the young queen found conditions in the palace scarcely to her taste, especially in connection with the kitchen, and as a result money had to be spent in improvements there. The accounts show the

following items;- 4 brazen pots for the cook .... £18.  
                           frying pans ..... £24.  
                           tin plates ..... £63-10.  
                           plates and trenchers ..... £13-13.

In addition there was a charge for cloth "for dychting of the vessell", napery and serviettes. The charge for "buird-claithis" continued to be a considerable ~~charge~~ until 1593.

(2) The new feminine element in the palace, too, was responsible for expenditure on little luxuries, items which had had no place in the accounts of the bachelor king. In 1590 there is an item in the discharge side of the accounts;- "Item to Fleming, baikar. of succour, for certane succour confectis and sweitmeit, £180." The auditors at once pounced on this and ordered "the like of this to be put in the diet book in time coming". (2) There was also the expense of the

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 22, p. xlii  
 (2) do. Vol. 22, p. xliii



~~the~~ queen for clothing, which James found so heavy an item that on occasion he had to approach the Master of the Cunzie House for help to meet her bills.

Within a few years expenditure increased with the increasing family, and James was soon in the old state of anxiety. As he himself said, one of the causes of his poverty was "the number of bairnes quhairwith God hes blessit us". (2) In the case of his first child, Prince Henry, Parliament came to his assistance and voted him £100,000 to meet the expenses attendant upon his birth. (3) But at once James saw more pressing claims on the money, and Sir George Hume was empowered to disburse £4,000 on mending and buying tapestry and tablecloths, chairs and stools, and John Elphinstone was instructed to spend a similar amount on dresses for the ladies of honour. (4) James obviously meant to make the ceremony of baptism an impressive one, for an imposing number of foreigners were expected to be in attendance, and ambassadors had been sent to England, France, Holland and Denmark with invitations, which James regarded in the nature of an investment, because he fully expected to receive a good return for all his expense. The foreign rulers sent gifts, but the best that the needy father received came from the Estates of Holland, a coffer of gold in recognition of the benefits James had conferred upon them

~~the~~ ~~book~~. (2) Fraser, Wemyss Book, Vol. 3, p. 38.

(3) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 22. ~~h.xlii~~; Acts iv, 50-52.

(4) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, 5th July, 1594. ~~p. 151~~.

by encouraging trade between the two countries. Not content with that, they intimated their intention of giving to the prince a life-rent of £5,000 to be paid yearly in the town of Campvere into the hands of the Conservator of the Privileges. (1) The value of the coffer was estimated by Moysie at £12,400. (2) Elizabeth sent a cupboard richly wrought.

But if the guests from abroad had only known, the ceremonies had cost James a great deal of anxious thought, because in spite of the handsome assistance from Parliament he was forced again to appeal to his rich friends. The Laird of Wemyss received an invitation to be present, but he was requested at the same time to "haist with sic quick stuff as ye may haue in redynes and may spair to the support of the chargis", such as wild fowl and venison. In a postscript to this letter James added that he knew there was a scarcity of venison in his part of the country, but the letter was really a circular one and was being sent also to the Highlands. (3) But in spite of such assistance from his friends, whom he so often called upon to "prove their affection", James was much in debt over the entertainment to his guests, and the baker and brewer had to suffer. It appears that Lord John Hamilton and others were put to the horn for failing to transmit to the Exchequer £700, which they had collected as part of the £100,000 tax

(1) An. Hist. Jas. VI. P. 337. (2) Moysie, Memoirs. p. 119.  
 (3) Fraser, Wemyss Book, Vol. 3, p. 31.



and they were commanded to pay the money over to the baker and the brewer. This was agreed to, but there was still £1,000 owing to them, and the Lords of the Exchequer decreed that this would be paid "as occasion shall readiest offer". (1)

Similar difficulties arose on the occasion of the baptism of his daughter, and again we find James circularising his wealthy friends. Thus to "his right trusty friend" the Laird of Balfour, he wrote asking him to the ceremony; he was to come "in such honourable manner as that action craveth", and the king 'thought good to request him to send such offerings and presents against that day as is best in season, as he regarded the king's honour and would merit his special thanks.' "So not doubting your willingness to pleasure us therein, since you are to be invited to take part of your own good cheer, we commit you to God." (2) As it happened, however, the expenses of the baptism had to be met out of the pockets of the Lords of the Bed-chamber. (3) Poor James! It is impossible not to feel pity for ailing so <sup>indigent</sup> ~~poor~~ that on one occasion he had to borrow a pair of silken hose from the Earl of Mar in order to make a good impression on a Spanish ambassador. (4)

In 1600 the young Charles was to be baptised, and, in the usual difficulties, we find <sup>James</sup> ~~him~~ writing to the Laird of Dundas, saying that it was necessary to provide great quantities of good cheer, which unfortunately could not be obtained without the help of his loving subjects. "Accounting

(1) Hist. MSS., Hamilton, p. 225.

(2) Aikman, Vol. 3, p. 219. (3) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 272.

(4) Chambers, Annals, Vol. 1, p. 201.



you one of the specialis of the nobility, we have thought good to request you to propyne with vennysons, wyld meit, Brussel fowlis, <sup>ie.</sup> (turkeys), caponis, with sic other provisions as are maist seasonable". James then invited him to "tak part of your awn guid cheir." (1)

Of course, as James was usually more or less in straits, there were other occasions on which he addressed such letters to the more wealthy of his subjects. In 1583 he was engaged in furnishing the Palace of Linlithgow, and being unable to meet the cost himself he applied to the Laird of Wemyss. The Laird promised that he would give assistance later, but desired to be excused for the present. On receipt of this rebuff the king sent the Comptroller's clerk to receive the money, saying that his "present furnissing can not suffer sic delay", and offering as security for repayment an order on the Comptroller out of the readiest of the taxation. Naturally this was no security at all, and the Laird refused to part with the money until severe pressure had been brought to bear upon him. (2)

In 1599 he was visited by an ambassador from France, and found it necessary to offer him the use of a horse. Wemyss was asked to send one of his finest hackneys with his finest saddle and equipment. Although James assured him that he was "assuredly lippyning" to him, the request was not complied

(1) Chambers, Annals, Vol. 1, p. 321.

(2) Fraser, Wemyss Book, Vol. 3, p. 21.

with, and it required a further letter, setting aside all excuses, and threatening the king's "forder wrath", before the animal was sent. (1) It was this same Laird who in 1600 indignantly reminded James in Parliament, when refusing a tax, that the lesser barons had given him great sums of money in his necessities, and the king had forgotten how much he owed them. (2)

On another occasion he wrote to Lord John Hamilton from Falkland stating that it had come to his ears that that nobleman was more engaged in building than in hunting, and that he would not be requiring the dogs that he had lent to the king. Therefore James proposed to keep them. (3) To the same person he complained that in good faith he was "disprouydit of horsis", and asked him "in a hamelie maner" to send a hunter, doubting not that he would be "a goode fallou in the aulde maner to this reasonable request". (4)

In 1590 James and Anne were residing at Dunfermline, where they entertained on a large scale, and the queen expressed a desire to make some visits in the neighbourhood. For this purpose a carriage was necessary, but James was too poor to purchase it, although very anxious to gratify the queen. His ready pen came to the rescue, however, and he appealed to Sir John Maxwell, requesting him to present "a good and proper horse" to the queen, flattering him by

(1) Fraser, Wemyss Book, Vol. 3, p. 35.

(2) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 283.

(3) Hist. MSS., Hamilton, p. 66.

(4) do. do. p. 67.



calling him one of his best friends, who had already given "sundry other proofs" of friendship. (1) Maxwell was also one of those honoured with one of the king's peculiar invitations. He sent in a quantity of sheep, but received a letter to hasten in the "kye and butter", so that he might have "thankis for all togidder". (2)

When friends failed him in his financial difficulties, James was forced to approach the money lenders; to meet the interest on these loans, or to pay them off, he borrowed afresh, and so he was never free from debt. While there were many that he borrowed from and few from whom he would not have borrowed, it was to George Heriot and Thomas Foulis that he ~~usually~~<sup>most often</sup> turned. For security they were usually given a part of the crown jewellery, most of which was in this way out of the king's possession. Heriot's relations with James are well known, but it is commonly thought that he was the only one that James dealt with. Foulis was a frequent lender, and in 1594 gave the king generous assistance, for in that year his difficulties were rather worse than usual. At the beginning of the year both James and Anne were heavily in his debt, and unfortunately, Foulis had been obliged to borrow extensively to raise the money ~~for~~<sup>for</sup> them. His creditors began to press for payment, and for his relief he was given the tack of the mines. (3) In September he lent the king

(1) Fraser, Maxwell Book, Vol. 2, p. 4.

(2) do. do. do. p. 27.

(3) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, 21st Jany., 1594. p. 117.



£14,598, and received in return two drinking cups, and the promise that payment would be made in the following November, but this promise was qualified, wisely, by James who gave him permission to coin the cups if payment was not made.<sup>(4)</sup> Three weeks later he lent £12,000 at 10%, and as security he received a jewel and the promise of the English gratuity, while the gold cups already in his possession were to be coined at once, so that he could satisfy his creditors. (1) The following December he became cautioner for James' debts of 5,900 merks, the security again being jewels. (2) Foulis had thus relieved the king from his immediate worries, but only at the cost of his own peace of mind, and later his health. At the beginning of 1598 he fell into a "phrensie", as Calderwood puts it, but James seems to have treated him very shabbily for he lost his offices, and the great jewel, the "H", was taken from him. As there was no possibility of the king paying back the money the only <sup>practicable</sup> ~~possible~~ thing to do was done, and a "supersedere" was issued prohibiting Foulis' creditors from troubling him until the king paid his debts. (3) In other words James had simply transferred the burden to others.

It comes with somewhat of a surprise to find Foulis again helping the king, this time in partnership with Robert Jowsie, and to do so they themselves borrowed £145,700. The

(1) { Reg. P.C., Vol. 5 h. 172, 30<sup>th</sup> Sept., 1594

(1) { Acs. Cunzie House, 1st Novr., 1592- 1st Novr., 1596.

(2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, 19<sup>th</sup> Decr., 1594, h. 191.

(3) Calderwood, Vol. 5, p. 673. (4) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, h. 167, 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1594.

Privy Council decided that they should receive £25,000 yearly for six years from the Comptroller, and £5,000 from the Treasurer. (1) By 1601 James owed Foulis £180,000. (4)

Some of the king's borrowing transactions are very complicated, as they necessarily were, when he was so slack in his payments. For example in 1594 John Arnot lent him £6,000, Thomas Achesoun becoming cautioner at the king's special desire; if James did not pay Arnot, then Achesoun was to do so, and for the latter's relief James gave him a drinking cup of gold, which he could coin if called on for the money. (2) On another occasion the king was anxious to purchase some jewellery, but not having the money, he induced George Heriot to buy it for him. He obeyed, although to do so he himself had to borrow the sum necessary, £6,110. James promised to repay him within a year at 10% interest, but if he failed then compound interest was to be added. The royal promise being notoriously poor security, Heriot obtained possession <sup>of</sup> a jewel with seventy-four diamonds and a great diamond set in gold. When Heriot began to complain that he was being hard pressed by his creditors, he was allowed to lay the jewels "in wad". (3)

To meet these continual demands for money the lenders had often to borrow from outside Scotland. In 1599 James received a letter from Sir Baptiste Hicke, of London, asking for the third time for satisfaction of "a great debt",

- (1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, 29th June, 1598., p. 463  
 (2) do. do. 10th Sept., 1594. p. 67.  
 (3) do. do. 22nd ~~Jan.~~ <sup>Mar.</sup>, 1599. p. 542  
 (4) do. Vol. 6, 28th <sup>Mar.</sup> May, 1601, p. 245



which Jowsie had borrowed from him on the king's behalf "this long time". The writer reminded James that payment had been promised by the Scottish ambassador in London, and hinted that the debt might be cleared off out of the English gratuity. (1)

Once when James was in Aberdeen he found that he had not sufficient money to pay the expenses of his journey home, and feeling certain that the citizens of that place would not lend him the sum necessary, he suggested that as the Earl of Angus had a great deal of influence with the Aberdonians he might borrow £2,000 from them. The Earl replied that he had already given the king great sums of money, but James <sup>p</sup>relied that he was honouring him by making the request, and that if he refused then others would very willingly oblige him. Angus finally agreed, but after waiting three years the city began litigation for repayment; the suit lasted from 1592 to 1612 when the king intervened and admitted that the debt was his. (2)

This same Earl, when Sir William Douglas of Glenbervie, was engaged in a law suit with James over the Estates and Earldom of Angus, and, although the king lost, he forced the Earl to give him 35,000 merks and to resign the lands of Braidwood in Douglasdale. This contract was ratified by

(1) Fraser, Maxwell Book, Vol. 2, p. 51.

(2) Fraser, Douglas Book, Vol. 2, p. 374.



Parliament in 1592. James adopted a peculiar method of obtaining the money; he borrowed it from his courtiers and sent them to the Earl for repayment. (1)

James always professed a feeling of deep distress when he heard that his creditors were in difficulties. In 1601 he extended his sympathy to Foulis, Achesoun and Jowsie, who were being hard pressed by their creditors for money which they had lent him. He was forced to admit that he was quite unable to pay, but he consoled them by promising, "in verbo principis", that if they could find out any method by <sup>h</sup>which the sum, £180,000, could be paid without injury to the Treasury, he would allow them to begin the collection of it. (2) To Foulis and his family who were really in a bad way, a pension of £1,000 was promised to be uplifted "from the readiest of the said means". In this case we are apt to feel more sympathetic towards these poor creditors than to the king. In 1591 so hopeless was the condition of the finances that it was decreed that the ordinary creditors of the crown were to lose their rights of legal redress. (3)

When he liked, James could prove that he was possessed of a true business instinct. In 1594 when arrangements were being made for the baptismal entertainments, he appealed to Arnot to provide the wines and beer, costing £5,000, and to

(1) Fraser, Douglas Book, Vol. 2, p. 371-3.

(2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 6, 28th Feb<sup>ry</sup> 1601, p. 245.

(3) Ex. Rolls, Vol. 22, Introd., p. xxiv.

take in hand the whole cost of the entertainment. He agreed; James owed him £11,500, and expressing himself as 'very willing' to see the debt paid, he allotted to Arnot certain rents from the royal estates. But it struck the monarch that rents varied in amount, and so it was laid down that should the income exceed the debt, then Arnot was to refund the balance. (1)

Sometimes he found it difficult to raise money because there was really very little that he could offer as sound security, and in that case he had to obtain cautioners. In 1588 Barnbarroch lent him £1,890, but he had to find three men who would undertake to pay the laird if the king failed to do so within a given time. James <sup>could not pay</sup> ~~failed~~, and the three cautioners, not trusting "the inviolable word of a prince", bargained with him, and received the right to collect a tax voted by Parliament and deduct their debt from the proceeds. (2) In 1581 James went to the Provost and Baillies of Edinburgh for assistance; they lent him 10,000 merks, but this sum they were compelled to borrow. Such generous conduct on their part so touched the king that he promised faithfully on the word of a prince to repay them by a certain date, out of the proceeds of a tax which had been granted to resist a threatened invasion by England. While the lenders knew that James had no scruples about misappropriating revenue for such purposes, they did not feel quite secure

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, 10th Septr., 1594. h. 167  
 (2) do. Vol. 4, 14th Febry., 1588. h. 251



until a clause was added in the agreement to the effect that, if James failed them, the Earls of Argyle, Montrose, Ruthven and others would pay for him, or hand over to the Provost and Baillies parts of their lands in Fife and Lothian to the annual value of 1,000 merks. (1)

Right up to the end of our period we find James in the hands of the money lenders, and in 1603 he had to apply to George Heriot for a supply of rings for his journey south, and for a loan of £6,666, while the citizens of Edinburgh lent him a similar sum. At the same time the silver vessels had to be sold. (2) Once in London, naturally, his greatest worries ceased, but his Scottish creditors pestered him for payment, approaching him in person in Whitehall. The Privy Council proclaimed that it was illegal and "derogatory to the honour and credit of his ancient kingdom" to do so. At his death his debts were nearly £400,000, a great sum in those days. (3)

A king who was continually in such straits for money naturally developed a great eagerness for its acquisition when occasion offered. Thus in connection with the Gowrie conspiracy, it was Ruthven's story of the man with the pot of gold under his cloak that enticed him away. Again, in 1599 a Spanish ship was forced to take refuge from the storms in Leith harbour; James ordered her to be thoroughly searched, and cause "particular instance be made for delivery of the

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 3, <sup>24th Mar.,</sup> ~~27th Febr.,~~ 1581. p. 366  
 (2) Treasurer's Acs. Jany., 6th, 1604.  
 (3) Purves, Revenue of Sc. Cr. p. xlii.



goods". The cargo consisted of a few stitches of Holland cloth and some "wostit stockingis", not worth more than £10 sterling, and yet it was only when it was pointed out to him that reprisals on Scottish traders would follow, and that it would be a breach of the peace between Spain and Scotland, that James desisted from this mean theft. (1)

Few men had a more intimate knowledge of money-lending than James VI, and on one occasion we actually find him adopting the profession himself, when he lent the money furnished by the marriage tax to the burghs at the usual interest of 10%, securing a return for the year 1593-4 of £98,000. We feel certain that he must have regretted the fact that his money was usually so urgently needed that he was precluded from following the business permanently.

We see then that poor James "was meikle fashit and troublit", (2) and the surprising thing was not that he had to stoop to some peculiar methods of raising money, but rather that he was able to carry on the administration of the government at all.

(1) Fraser, Maxwell Book, Vol. 2, p. 44.

(2) Purves, Revenue of Sc. Crown, p. xxxv.

### Chapter III.

#### The Results of James' Poverty on his Home Policy.

- (1) General weakness of the king. Powerless against the nobles.
- (2) Lack of means to maintain a guard. King-stealing.
- (3) Unable to keep advisers at his table.
- (4) Constitutional results. Smaller barons purchase representation in Parliament. The end of holding lands in 'blench'.
- (5) Debasement of the coinage. Analysis of the Accounts of the Cunzie House.
- (6) The Octavians.
- (7) The Church. Connection between finance and the development of Episcopacy. Exploitation of the wealth of the Church before 1567. Dilapidation of the patrimony. The partnership of crown and Reformed church. The Thirds. The Teinds. The policy of Moray and Morton. Tulchan Episcopacy. Analysis of the Thirds. The treatment of the Presbyterian clergy. The Platt. The Act of Annexation. Results of the quarrels between crown and church over finance.

### Chapter III. The Results of James VI's Poverty on his Home Policy.

-----

"Being borne to be a king, ye are rather borne to 'onus' than 'honos'". (Bas. Dor., Epistle, Works, p. 138.)

"James is so little and unable as he will never be a good king". (Hist. MSS., Salisbury, p. 490).

---

Riches mean power, poverty means weakness. How often must the truth of this old saying have been realised by James during these years of constant worry. Foreign visitors were constantly remarking on the fact that "the want of revenue and money causes the want of authority", (1) and since he had not the wealth out of which he could give pensions to his nobility "and men of virtue", he was less followed and worse obeyed by his subjects" (2)

The barons as a class were much wealthier than the king; he could only afford three or four horses for hunting, and sometimes not that, while his nobles and many of the lairds could boast of well-filled stables. Some of them were in receipt of an income of £20,000, and this wealth enabled them to adopt an independent attitude and openly defy him.(4) Stable government under these circumstances was impossible, and "prince and commonwealth were for ever tossing like a boat on the seas to and fro 'vento nobilitatis et vulgi fluctibus'" (3) So poor was he that he could never punish

(1) Cal. SC. P., Vol. 5, No. 638.

(2) do. Vol. 9, No. 486.

(3) do. Vol. 5, No. 638.

(4) "Every insolent Earl is ready to beard him". "In execution of justice, they fear him not". Cal. Sc. P., 10, pp. 11&35.



the rebellious baron, nor reward the faithful, and here we have the explanation of the raids and king-seizings so common in the reign. He was the plaything of a party. Obviously the first necessity in such an unsettled state of affairs was a strong bodyguard, which would afford him protection, give him a feeling of security, enable him to deal sharply with the highest offenders, and in time of open rebellion furnish him with the nucleus of a force strong enough to crush it. But while the Earl of Mar could raise a force of five hundred men well equipped, James was generally in difficulties about his guard. (1) In 1578 this was one of the most important matters taken up by Elphinstone in his negotiations with the English court, and a bald request for the necessary money was laid before Elizabeth, but unfortunately for James, the regents and indeed the whole country, Elizabeth could not see her way to grant it. (2) If her decision had been different not only would the history of Scotland have been altered, but Elizabeth herself would have been spared a great deal of expense later. Two years later the king was still determined to have a guard, but the money could not be found, but it had been settled that it should consist of twenty-four gentlemen, the sons of nobles, for only such would be willing and able to pay their own expenses. This scheme, however, met with little support, and had to be abandoned as a practical solution of

(1) Bowes, Correspondence, p. 279.

(2) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 24.

of the difficulty, as had also the scheme of fining nobles who refused a summons to meet the king, the proceeds to be applied to pay the expenses of the guard for one month. (1) Parliament took up the question in 1584 and enacted that the guard <sup>should</sup> ~~be~~ be raised; forty persons, able honest and well-horsed, and having means of their own should be chosen, but, <sup>as it was recognised</sup> ~~recognising~~ that payment of some kind was necessary, it was agreed that each member of the force should receive £200 a year. The force was raised, but the expected happened: two years later we find the men complaining that their pay was five months in arrears, and that "they were brocht to that necessitie and extremitie that they are not able to sustene <sup>(2)</sup> thameselffis ony langare". Requests for money for the purpose of maintaining the guards figure prominently in negotiations with England and European countries, but it is generally true to say that James was never sure of his guards. To get the king into their clutches was thus a fairly easy matter for the nobles, and they thus obtained full control over the country's policy, foreign and domestic. And yet some have criticised the reign on the ground that James' policy shows inconsistency!

Again, when it was necessary to put down rebellion he could only with great difficulty raise a force. True, under the old feudal law the nobles were supposed to serve at their expense, but the law could not be enforced. In 1584

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 5, 5th April, 1580; Vol. 7, 20th Mar., 1584  
 (2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, p. 120, 28th Nov. 1586



he proposed to levy an army of four hundred footmen in order to put down Angus, Mar, Gowrie and others, but only three hundred could be raised, and as there was little chance of the men receiving their wages, no great hopes were held out that the force would ever be completed. (1) The drum was sounded in Edinburgh and Leith, but there was a disappointing response, because the citizens could not find out where James was to get the money to pay them, unless out of the escheats of the lords who were still to be defeated, and most men "were scrupulous to depend on that pay or enter into that action". (2) James could only fall back on some of the other barons, who of course were the gainers.

Again, James could not as a rule depend upon the barons, his natural advisers, for assistance in the arduous work of government, and for the same reason. What was required in the first few years of the personal rule of the young king was a permanent council of able and experienced men always at hand to guide him, and in 1579 the proposal was made that six members of the Privy Council should take up their residence with the king in rotation. But as the revenues could not meet the expense of giving these men lodging and food, the only thing to do was to ask them to provide a table for themselves. This they refused to do, and as a result, bereft of his proper advisers, he was at the mercy

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 7, 5th April, 1584.

(2) do. do. 10th April, 1584. "How they will be laid, at the month's end, as they expect, God knows." Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 10, p. 45. (1589)



of self-seeking courtiers whose advice was so pernicious.

(1) He was likewise too poor to maintain the gentlemen of "His Hienes Chalmer", and thirty barons, or near relatives of barons were appointed all having "the moyen to leif on their awin". (2)

It is in the king's poverty that we have to look for the explanation of the important constitutional change that took place in the reign. The Act of James I passed in 1427 ordaining that regular representatives of the lesser barons should be present at the meetings of the Estates had never been carried out, although they had continued to have an indefinite right of attendance. Now in 1587 it was decreed that they should meet and elect two representatives or commissioners for each shire. Very few took advantage of their new privilege, to the chagrin of the government and "the grite hinder of his Hienes service", (3) and the Privy Council ordered that the law should be obeyed on pain of the horn and escheat. Again they disobeyed, and James had to adopt a method of selection. In February, 1588 a number of them were convened, and "upon speciall and gude respectis moving the small baronis and frehalderis, they made ane free and willing offer for the necessar supporte of the effearis of the king's estate of the sowme of £40,000". (4) One third of this was to be paid at once, and the rest

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 5, 31st Decr., 1579.

(2) Fraser, Elphinston Book, Vol. 1, p. 112.

(3) Reg. P. 6., Vol. 4, 14th Novr., 1587. h. 227.

(4) do. do. 1st Febry., 1588; Rait, Sc. Parlts. p. 209.  
h. 245

when they received full representation, but there was so much controversy about the £40,000, that it was not till 1594 that the elections were properly held. There seem to be two possible explanations of this great development in the history of the Scottish Parliament; first, and from what we know of James, this seems satisfactory enough, there was the ready money, and second, James had now a more direct hold on these lesser barons, who had always paid the taxation levied upon the baronial estate. It matters little which view is adopted; they amount to the same thing in the end, namely they had paid handsomely for the privilege, and if James could possibly manage it, they would also be made to pay in the future. That the change was a pure sale is evident from the words of the Privy Council, who refer to the bargain in plain terms--"forty thousand pounds granted to us by the barons of our realm for granting to them of vote and place in our Parliaments hereafter". (1) In 1600 when the Estates refused James a tax, he threateningly remarked that he had made them an estate in Parliament, but the Laird of Wemyss replied for the others, "We have bought our seats, we have paid your majesty for them, and we cannot in justice be deprived of them". (2) James may have gained by the change, but he had added an estate that was to present a strong and sturdy opposition to his schemes.

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 18th Dec., 1588, p. 337.  
 (2) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 284.



In his eagerness to turn everything into money James abolished that romantic form of feudal tenure so common in feudal societies, the holding of land "in blench". Men who held land under this system paid only some trifling thing, in itself of little intrinsic worth, but serving the purpose of maintaining without question the rights of the king as sovereign lord. In 1596 an ordinance of the Court of the Exchequer was issued transmuting all these token payments into a fixed money scale. For example;-

Ilk pair of gluffis .....£3.  
 Ane halk .....£20.  
 Ane reid mantill .....£40. (1)

The Monk  
 Another important result of the poverty of the crown at this period is found in its policy in connection with the coinage; the coining of money presented obvious source of profit, and while all rulers of the time were more or less guilty, James in his need seems to have regarded the profits of the Cunzie House as "ane cheif rent and casualitie belangand to his crowne, be the quhilk the personis of the Gaird hes been usually paid and sindrie utheris necessar effearis of the cuntrey outred and furnist". (2) This could only be achieved by a systematic debasement of the currency, and so 'the Mint went fast'. (3)

Thus the gold coins of Queen Mary were ....22 carats fine.  
 In 1580 they were only.....21 do. do. (4)  
 In 1587 they rose to .....21½ do. do. (5)  
 From 1588-90 they improved and were .....23 car. 7gr. do. (6)

(1) Ex. Rolls, Vol 23, 9th July, 1596.

(2) Reg. P. C., Vol. 4, 11th Decr., 1585.

(3) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 11, p. 417.

(4) Cochran Patrik, Coinage, Vol. 1, p. lvi.

(5) Acs. Cunzie House, 1587-8; (6) 1588-90; (7) 1590-92; (8) 1592-6



From 1590-1592 they remained at ..... 23 car. 7gr. fine.  
But after that they came down again to..22 carats fine.(7,8)

The silver coins suffered a similar debasement;-  
In 1555 they were.....11 deniers fine. (1)  
In 1572 they were..... 6 do. do. (1)  
From 1587-88 they rose again rose to..11 do. do. (2)  
They remained at this level until 1590-2 when they fell  
to 10½ deniers fine (3),  
and, as far as we can learn from the Accounts of the  
Cunzie House, they remained at this standard until the end  
of our period.

The copper coins, which in 1587 had been 3 deniers fine,  
fell in 1592 to 1 denier. (4)

Putting the same thing differently we find that  
In 1483 one pound of silver was coined into ... 186 shillings  
In 1582 into ... 640 do.  
In 1601 into ... 960 do.

A similar variation can be observed in the gold coins.  
In 1483 one pound of gold was coined into... 1920 shillings  
In 1584 (the equivalent of) into ... 7,200 do.  
In 1601 into ... 11,520 do.

Again one ounce of silver was coined  
In 1565 into ..... 360 pennies.  
In 1582 into ..... 444 do.  
In 1598 into ..... 640 do.  
In 1601 into ..... 720 do.

This debasement of the Scottish currency is reflected  
in the manner in which the value of the Scottish money  
varied when compared with English money of the same nominal  
value. Till about 1355 they were equal.  
In 1565 the ratio was 1 to 6.  
In 1579 the ratio was 1 to 8.  
In 1597 the ratio was 1 to 10.  
In 1601 the ratio was 1 to 12. (5)

- (1), (5) Cochran Patrik, Coinage, p. lxxv.  
(2) Acs. Cunzie House, 1587-88.  
(3) do. 1590-92.  
(4) do. 1587-88 & 1592-96.

The profits made from such debasement were considerable.

For the period April, 1582 to May, 1583 they were	£12,745.
For the three years 1583-86 they were .....	£40,000.
For the period April, 1586 to August, 1587 .....	£10,000.
For the year 1587-88 .....	£2,500.
For the two years 1588-90 .....	£26,800.
For the two years 1590-92 .....	£10,000.
For the four years 1592-96 .....	£11,000.
For the two months, October, 1601 to November, 1601, when the Mint was exceptionally busy the profit reached	£32,000.
For the period December, 1602 to August, 1604 ...	£15,000.(1)

The Corporation of Edinburgh was willing to pay the sum of 110,000 merks for the privilege of the tack of the Cunzie House for two years and three months, and they must have reckoned on making more than that before they would have been agreeable to make the bargain. (2) Morton was reported to have made great profits from the coinage, by calling in the good coins and replacing them by Dalkeith money. (3)

The records afford many illustrations of his policy. To take a few; in 1578 the Council ordered that the silver coins of the value of 30/-, 20/-, 10/- and 6/- were to be returned to the Master of the Cunzie House, who would buy them for 32/6, 21/8, 10/10 and 6/6 respectively. Counterfeit coins were to be broken up, and the true ones to be marked and re-issued to pass for 36/9, 24/6, 12/3, and 7/4. At the same time a charge was to be made for the work of 4/3 for the 30/ piece, and so on down to 10d for the 6/ piece. (4) In 1581 when James had not the money to pay a debt to Lord

- (1) Acs. Cunzie House. *Approximate figures given.*  
 (2) Reg. P. C., Vol 5, 26th Jany., 1594. h. 119.  
 (3) Spottiswoode, Vol. 2, p. 219.  
 (4) Reg. P. C., Vol. 2, 29th July, 1578.



Ruthven amounting to £40,000, he gave him liberty to collect the money from the merchants of Edinburgh, who were the tacksmen of the coinage at the time, but the profits were also to pay 10,000 merks borrowed from the Town Council in addition to a great number of smaller loans amounting to over £5,000. (1) The extent to which the currency was debased to cover all these debts must have been very great. In 1588 the Council ordered that the £3-15/ piece should pass for £4. (2)

As a result the people suffered because it was inevitable that the general level of prices rose with every successive debasement, and there were frequent murmurings against the government. So serious was it in 1583, that, in order to prevent <sup>grave</sup> ~~serious~~ trouble, a committee had to be set up of members of the Privy Council, the Provost and some other prominent citizens of the capital, to report on the state of the currency. They stated that it was 'just right'. (3) But a more reprehensible attempt to delude the people was made by the king himself; in an act of 1597 it was laid down that James was moved with pity for the miseries of the poor people arising from the scarcity of coins of a small denomination, and therefore without considering any profit which might accrue to himself, "as indeed his majesty neither seeks nor gets any kind of commodity by the coinage",

- (1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 2, 5th June, 1581, p. 390. & 16th June, p. 393-4.  
 (2) do. Vol. 4, 30th Aug., 1588, p. 317.  
 (3) do. Vol. 3, p. 642, 4th Mar. 1583, p. 4.



the deficiency was to be made good. (1) Two years later he referred to the practice of debasement as being indulged in by all princes in time of urgent need, but he asked his subjects to believe that he did not wish to purchase a small gain to himself, if harm would thereby fall upon his people, and accordingly he had appointed a commission of the Privy Council to find out how much it would profit the king and hurt his subjects if another change was made in the currency. (2)

Such statements have all the appearance of deliberate untruths, and yet an analysis of the Accounts of the Cunzie House, do furnish some excuse for them. The lack of system in this department has already been referred to; large profits were certainly made, but there were so many calls on them that not only did James never actually receive any money on the completion of any year's work, but was actually in debt to the Master. Every compt with one notable exception ends with the statement "and sua the comptair is superexpendit..."

(I) The Account for April, 1582 to May, 1583.

Thomas Achesoun reported a profit of £12,745-16-11, but in addition to the expenses proper to the work of making the coins, there are many like this;-"To John Hume of Maunderstone by command of the king's precept, £333-6-8." For 'clait his' for the king, £2,000, for a page £100, to the king's ministers the Treasurer, Colonel Stewart, advocates, sums varying from

(1) Acts, Vol. 4, p. 122. (2) Acts, Vol. 4, p. 181.

£100 to £1,000. The total discharge amounted to £17,928-6-10, and thus the superexpenses amounted to £5,082-9.

(II) The Account for May, 1583 to April, 1586.

The first charge on the profits is of course the superexpenses from the last account, £5,082-9, but in addition there is a long list of gifts and expenses to be met by order of the king;- "To my Lord of Arran £2,000", Roger Ashtoun, Mr. William Keith, Mr. William Lindsay and others received £250 each. The guard, which in the last account received £5,180, received in these three years £21,832. Alexander Young got £1,666-13-4, the King's nurse £1,000, the Laird of Merchiston's loan to the king was repaid, £666-13-4, Thomas Foulis received £120 for making gold pins, and a further sum per Roger Ashtoun of £200. To Sir Robert Melville and others in his name was given £6654-18-11, and there were many payments to the Clerk of the Register and other persons. The total discharge was £60,300, the superexpenses, £20,540-5-7.

(III) The Account for April, 1586 to August, 1587.

The first payment out of profits was the superexpenses from the last account, which was double the profit made in this period. Then follows the usual list; the Secretary got £1,000, the Chancellor £500, Sir Robert Melville, Treasurer Depute £2,559-6-8. The total discharge was £27,307, and the deficit £17,379-2-11.

(IV) The Account for August, 1587 to August, 1588.

In this account the profit on the various kinds of coins is detailed.

- (a) Gold Coins, lion nobles and gold crowns, 21½ carats fine.  
 Weight coined.....6lbs. 9oz.  
 Profit per stone .....£220.  
 Total profit .....£90-4-8.
- (b) Silver coins, 40/, 30/, 20/, 10/ pieces, 11 deniers fine.  
 Weight coined .....3stones 8 lbs.  
 Profit per stone .....£22-2-6.  
 Total profit .....£77-8-9.
- (c) Copper coins, 8d and 4d groats of 3 d. fine.  
 Weight coined .....140 stones.  
 Profit per stone .....£17-2-9.  
 Total profit .....£2,399-5.

The total profit was thus £2,566-18-5, but in addition to the payment of the Master's superexpenses, £17,379-2, there were other expenses, and the total discharge was £20,597-15. The new superexpenses were therefore £18,030-16-11.

(V) The Account for 1588 to 1590.

- (a) Gold coins, thrissel nobles, 23 carats, 7 grains fine.  
 Weight coined .....20stones.  
 Profit per stone.....£610-12-8.  
 Total profit .....£12,202-13-4.
- (b) Silver coins;-  
 (1) 14 deniers, 12 grains fine.  
 Weight coined .....11 stones, 9lbs. 5oz.  
 Profit per stone .....£354-2-8.  
 Total profit .....£4,102-8-4.  
 (2) 11 deniers fine.  
 Weight coined .....14 lbs. 10oz.  
 Profit per stone .....£22-2-6.  
 Total profit .....20-4-6.
- (c) Copper coins, 12 grains fine.  
 Weight coined .....1198 stones 5lbs.  
 Profit per stone.....£8-15-4.  
 Total profit .....£10,505-4-1.

The total profit of £26,830-10-4, however, was more than swallowed up by the heavy expenditure. First came the Master's superexpenses of £18,030-16-11, a pension of £1,000 to the



Lord Chancellor, one of £2,000 to the Commendator of Pittenweem, and so on, giving a total discharge of £46,952-7-11, and leaving the Master<sup>sup</sup>superexpendit<sup>t</sup> to the amount of £20,121-17-7.

VI) The Account for September, 1590 to November, 1592.

(a) Gold Coins;†

- (1) Thrissel nobles, 23 carats, 7grains fine.  
 Weight coined ..... 1stone, 8lbs. 15oz.  
 Profit per ounce .....£1-7-8.  
 Total Profit .....£551-19.
- (2) £4 pieces, 22 carats fine.  
 Weight coined .....2stones, 2lbs. 2oz.  
 Profit per oz. ....£1-18-4.  
 Total profit .....£1,046-10.

- (b) Silver Coins, half merks and 40 penny pieces, 10½ deniers fine.  
 Weight coined .....228 stones, 2lbs., 10oz.  
 Profit per stone .....£34-14-8.  
 Total profit .....£7,924-17-11.

The total profit amounted to £10,423-6-11, but the super-expenses from the last account were nearly double that sum, and there were numerous other payments. Thus the king received six £4 pieces, and twenty-five half merk pieces, amounting to £32-6-8; the Lord Chancellor received "ane piece of ilk sort", £4-10, the Lord Treasurer, the Clerk of the Council and others obtained one piece of silver, £49-10. The cost of printing and making the proclamation about the £4 gold pieces and the half silver merks cost £75-6-8, and there were the usual fees for the men in the Cunzie House. The total discharge was £30,964-3-4, and the deficit was £20,540-16-4.

(VII) The Account for November, 1592 to 1596.

- (a) Gold Coins, £4 gold pieces, 22 carats fine.

Weight coined..... 1stone, 11b., 10½oz.  
 Profit per oz. ....£1-18-4.  
 Total profit .....£541-9-2.

(b) Silver Coins, half merks and 40 penny pieces, 10½ deniers fine.

Weight coined .....29st., 15lbs., 4½oz.  
 Profit per stone ....£34-14-8.  
 Total profit .....£1,040-8-9.

(c) Copper Coins, 4d pieces, 1 d. fine.

Weight coined .....26st., 11lbs.  
 Profit per stone ....£20.  
 Total profit .....£533-15.

With a view to cutting down the superexpenses the Master was given Aberdeen's share of the king's tocher, £7,000, but even then his total charge could only meet about half of the outstanding deficit. In addition to the fees proper to the department, there was lent to the king "upon his bond and obligation" £2,000, and "mair lent" to him "conforme to his letter" £666. The Guard accounted for £1,000. £1,200 was paid to Robert Jowsie for jewels sent to Denmark for which Sir George Home and the Master Coiner became cautioners at the king's command. £666-13-4 was paid for a chain of gold given to a French ambassador in 1590, and £2,666-13-4 for furnishing of Their Majesties' houses by the command of Sir Robert Melville; payment of this sum had been refused "and so the same rests unpaid". There was "mair payit" for the same purpose £2,000, and there had been paid £266-13-4 on behalf of David Seton when James had removed from Holyrood in 1595. The total discharge was £39,173-3-8, and the new superexpenses amounted to £28,257-10-8.



(VIII) The Account for October, 1601 to Novr., 1601.

(a) Gold Coins, £6 and £3 pieces, 22 carats fine.

Weight coined 20 st., 5 lbs., 3 oz, 15 d.

Profit per stone .....£768.

Total profit .....£22,522-17-6.

(b) Silver Coins, half merk, 40 and 20 penny pieces,

Total profit .....£9,544-7-6.

The total profit was £32,067-5. There was delivered to the king "ane sex pound piece", to the Lord Chancellor one coin of each kind coming to £10-5, and other officials likewise. The total discharge was small, being only £6,833-9-7, and since the Cunzie House had been in tack from the date of the last account no superexpenses were deducted. For the first time, then, we note a balance of £25,233-15-4, which sum was paid over to Alexander, Master of Elphinstone, the late Treasurer, and Alexander his son in part payment of his superexpenses. This, however, was only accomplished at the expense of Thomas Achesoun, whose superexpenses for the period 1592 to 1596, amounting to £28,257-10-8, should now have been paid. He did not receive payment till 1604.

(IX) The Account for December, 1602 to August, 1604.

The profit from the gold and silver coins was £15,748-11, not enough to pay the outstanding superexpenses of £28,257, and there were many other expenses. For example John Arnot received two sums, one of £11,000 and another of £3,333-6-8. The total discharge amounted to £46,765-16-6, and the deficit to £31,017-5-5.



These accounts certainly show that James did not "get any kind of commodity" from the coinage, but rather that he was always greatly in debt to the Master Coiner, but we are apt to wonder what he would have done without the Cunzie House to appeal to to eke out his scanty revenue. He learned, too, that debasement was a short-sighted policy; it was convenient for the moment, but its final results were bad." Making the coins baser", he wrote, "will breed your commodity, but it is not to be used but at a great necessity". (1) As the years went on he too suffered by the rise in prices, but what was worse, so did the nation.(2)

The year 1596 is of great importance in the financial history of the reign, because in that year the king found the situation so bad that he confessed himself beaten. Expenses had increased enormously largely because of the revolt of the Popish Earls, and money simply had to be obtained. A committee of eight men, "The Octavians", ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ appointed to investigate the whole problem of the finances, clear up the muddle and exercise complete control, so that in future he would be powerless to interfere. He was content to deprive himself of the power to reward any subject by the alienation of crown property, if only a cure could be found for his misery, although of course this is not the reason given officially. It was made out that James had found that his estate was being abused by courtiers

(1) Bas. Dor., Works, p. 163.

(2) In 1599 the smaller barons petitioned against "the present state of the money now current," and asked that James' policy be "Stayed".  
Supp. Parly. Papers, Vol. I. MSS. No. 48

and government officers, who seemed more anxious to enrich themselves than to do their duty to the king. (1) The report referred to "the wrack and decay of our rents by unprofitable dispositions out of the property of the crown"; the royal parks and farms had been neglected, the fees to keepers of the palaces had increased, the proceeds from the customs had diminished although trade had increased, food prices had risen, rents from the royal estates had fallen through the "spilling of the cunzie", money had been set aside to meet the cost of repairing the royal castles, yet they were falling into ruin, the spending of money by the officers of the household was "na wayis controllit nor keipit" according to the ordinance of the Privy Council and the Exchequer. The result was that "all thingis is come into sic confusioun that efter tryall tane it is fund that <sup>a</sup>thair is not quheit nor beir nor other rent to serve his hienes in breid nor drink nor any wayis". To remedy this terrible state of affairs James granted to the Octavians control over the entire revenue from whatever source it was drawn, with the right to appoint and dismiss all officials, to examine the accounts of all existing officials, and to advise the king about all money matters. They were to investigate the whole question of the customs, and enquire particularly into the effects on the king and realm of the changes made in the currency. No payment was to be made

(1) Reg. P.C., Vol. 5, p. 757, Articles.  
Misc. Exch. Papers, MSS., Vol. 1.



without their signatures, or those of any five of them, the king on his part promising not to make any requests for money to them. The number of persons attending upon the king was to be reduced; they were to <sup>Seek</sup> ~~seek~~ "whais service is superfluous"; the household was to be provided for out of the proceeds of the royal estates, anything left over was to be sold, and provisions were to be kept in the king's house so that they might be "weill and easelie staikit".

This revolution in the management of the finances was very successful, and it is a matter for regret that it did not come sooner and last longer. The new governors forced those who were in arrears to pay their dues to the king "as was wonder to record", the household was well supplied with the necessaries of life "as the lyk was not in the king's time before nor ever sence sa lang as he remaynit in Scotland", and at the end of the ~~first~~ year they freed James from debt. (1) Unfortunately they only held office for one year.

(1) An. Hist., Jas. the Sext, Naylor's MSS.



### The Church.

The poverty of the crown and the history of the church are indissolubly connected, and it is impossible to study the reign from the financial aspect without being constantly reminded of the close relationship. But the whole question of the controversy between crown and church is a very difficult and complicated one, and is a matter for prolonged investigation and separate discussion. Here we can only attempt to show the bearing of finance on the ecclesiastical history of the reign.

To view the reign in this connection correctly, it must be borne in mind that the policy of exploiting the wealth of the church had been pursued for at least a century before our period opens. While James I is reported as having <sup>spoken of</sup> ~~regarded~~ David I as a "sair saint", he was anxious to maintain ecclesiastical efficiency, and did not contemplate plundering the church. After the Papal Schism Rome returned to the policy of centralisation of patronage, and so the 15th century saw the development of a controversy between national interests, especially the interests of the crown, and those of the Papacy. In 1487 Innocent VIII made a concession to James III by agreeing to wait eight months during which royal nominations could be sent to him; this was almost a right of nomination, and it was of course a means of adding to the royal revenue. (1) Upon this right and the degeneracy of the Papacy James IV founded his

(1) "Archbishops of St. Andrews", Vol. 1, p. 157.

ecclesiastical policy, and it is clear that in making Ross, his brother, and Alexander, his illegitimate son, Archbishops of St. Andrews, he was introducing a premonition of Tulchan Episcopacy, for they were minors and he drew the revenues. The Concordat of Bologna in 1516 did not pass unnoticed in Scotland, where a right of nomination was insisted on. In the reign of James V the royal finances became inadequate to meet the expenses of the household and the new and heavy item of artillery, and when the remedy of a rich marriage for the king failed to materialise, the king's advisers turned to the wealth of the church. The strength of the crown's position lay in the fact that the Pope feared that the policy of Henry VIII might be followed in Scotland, and the prelates themselves were prepared to make sacrifices in return for state help against the heretics. Thus in 1532, in connection with the so-called foundation of the College of Justice, Clement was induced to grant to James £10,000 Sc. a year in perpetuity, to be raised from the prelates. Between 1532 and 1536 the prelates compounded for a payment of about £72,000, and in order to raise the money they were induced to feu their lands on terms which in many cases amounted, in spite of Canon Law, to a sale. Before the end of the reign another attempt was made to exploit the fears of the Pope, and a large tax was granted, which, however, was not levied owing to the death of the king. Towards the end of her regency Mary of Guise



obtained a tax from Paul IV in order to repair the losses suffered under the Hamilton administration, and in fact the Pope was frankly told by the Cardinal Protector that the clergy were wealthy and must be compelled to contribute to the Royal Exchequer. When our period opens the needs of the crown were greater than before and the policy of exploiting the wealth of the church had to continue. That policy was now concerned with the Thirds. (1)

After the triumph of the Reformers in 1560, the vital question had to be settled -- the question of the ownership of the vast possessions of the Roman Catholic Church. Upon the decision depended the whole fate of the new church, and also, to a great extent, the power of the crown. While some of the more optimistic of the Protestant clergy may have had visions of succeeding to the ownership of all the Catholic wealth, temporality as well as spirituality (the teinds<sup>1</sup>), it appears from the First Book of Discipline, that when they spoke of their "patrimony" they did not specifically include the monastic property, either because, even at that stage, they seem to have regarded it as hopelessly secularised, or possibly because they thought that a judicious sacrifice on this point might enable them to obtain the episcopal property. In any case the followers of Knox looked forward with confidence to the time when they would be wealthy enough to endow a scheme to

(1) Based on Prof. Hannay's investigations on the Hamilton Papers, and on his article in the Sc. H. Rev., XVI, 61.



relieve the poor, establish a national system of education, and pay stipends. Unfortunately there were other claimants to this wealth, the barons and the crown itself. The crown could claim that it had been greatly impoverished by monarchs in the past, from David I onwards, granting the fairest of their possessions to enrich the Catholic Church, and, now that it was destroyed, there was good reason for demanding that they be returned. In addition there was the fact that in other Protestant countries in Europe the rulers had profited by the revolution to enrich themselves and thereby strengthen their authority, and certainly in Scotland there was much to be said for this argument. But the worst enemy to the Reformed Church was the aristocracy; the nobles had too often been enthusiasts for Protestantism for selfish reasons, and having already seized church lands at the beginning of the struggle, they were most unwilling to give them up. Against these two foes the new church struggled in vain.

The financial settlement was made in 1561, when it was decided that those who were in actual possession of the property were to remain in possession, but that a tax of one third the value of the benefices was to be levied, the burdens of the crown and the stipends of the clergy being paid out of the proceeds. The nobles had thus won the day, and church and crown were henceforth united in a partnership, which from the nature of things could not work satisfactorily. At the same time the odds and ends like the chaplaincies and friaries were

earmarked for hospitals and schools. This left the monastic and secular benefices. (1) Vacancies to monastic benefices were filled by appointing lay commendators, who had only a life-rent of the revenues, but they struggled with success later to get their lands turned into lordships of erection. Tulchan Episcopacy was a temporary compromise, an 'interim', whereby the secular power in Morton's hands continued the exploitation of church property, and, by adroit manipulation of the ministers, prevented the Scottish ecclesiastical system from losing touch with the English.

In dealing with this partnership of crown and church the first point to be noted is that the lands of the church had been undergoing serious dilapidation before the Reformation, and so the income from the Thirds was much less than it would otherwise have been. To this process of dilapidation the crown, because of its poverty, had contributed. As we have seen, the prelates in James V's reign had begun to feu their lands on easy terms to raise the money for the king. The feuar received a charter from the prelate, but to regularise the proceedings and safeguard his position, he was anxious to have his charter confirmed by the state. The crown was willing to assist him, because the fees exacted by the Treasurer for confirmation were regarded as one means of increasing the revenue; accordingly in Mary's reign, 1564, an Act invited applications for confirmation, and stated that such a confirmation would be as good as one proceeding from Rome. An Act of 1578 was passed with

(1) Reg. P. C., New Series, Vol. 1, Introd., Masson.



a view to stimulate application to the crown, and since the practice of double confirmation had sprung up, it enacted that priority of confirmation should determine the title. "Thus holders of infeftments of Kirk lands who had been diligent to compound were rewarded, and a stimulus in the interests of the Treasury was provided for the future". An Act of 1584 ordered that all unconfirmed feus of Kirk lands be submitted, and that failure to make application would be a sufficient ground of reduction at the instance of the Advocate, when the lands would fall to the king's disposition.(1)

Again, many of the Catholic clergy, foreseeing the results of the Reformation had, before 1560, made profit for themselves by disposing <sup>of</sup> parts of their lands to the nobles for a money(2) reward. Laymen had been presented to livings so that the aristocracy could get the profits; for example Alexander Campbell was given the Bishopric of Brechin in 1566 with power to alienate lands and titles, which he did to the Earl of Argyle. (3) Even when churchmen did not prove so tractable, means were found to satisfy the greed of the nobles; the Earl of Cassillis forced a monk to forge the necessary documents, a retainer stabbed the monk, and then was hung. Another abbot was roasted by the Earl until he consented to sign over the property to him. (4) Also the value placed upon the benefices was much less than it should have been, and in many cases bishops and abbots were able to have their thirds remitted.

(1) Sc. H. Rev. XVI, Prof. Hannay. (2) Reg. P.C. 1, 19th. Spr. 1561  
 (3) Keith Affairs, 3, 45. (4) Cunningham, Vol. 1, 384-7;  
 Cook, Hist. of Ref., 3, Append., xlix.



In other words the patrimony of the old church was so despoiled and dilapidated, that when the partners came to receive their thirds, they discovered that they were not sufficient for the double purpose of maintaining the new church and furnishing relief to the crown. In these circumstances both partners suffered and the way was open to disputes about the respective shares. Disputes soon developed into serious quarrels, and the controversy between church and state had begun.

In 1561 the Collector of the Thirds received in money the sum of £33,933, and of this the church got only £18,432. This was very little more than 50%, and it had estimated that it required not less than 75%. Nor can we be certain that this proportion was actually paid over, because many withheld payment and those ministers who did not receive their share had no redress. Many, too, may have been in arrears because the accounts were audited long after the period to which they refer. (1)

While Mary reigned the crown had first call on the Thirds, and Knox condemned this arrangement as "corruption". "Weill", he protested, "yf the end of this ordour, pretended to be tacken for the sustentatioun of the Ministeris, be happy, my judgement failleth me; for I am assured that the Spreit of God is nott the auctor of it". His "unsaverie" denunciation was met by Lethington's argument that "the Ministeris being susteained, the Quene will nott gett at the yearis end to buy hir a pair of new schoes". (2) Obviously there was no provision made here

(1) Crockett, Thesis, D. Litt., Ed. Univ., "Erskine of Dun".

(2) Knox, Vol. II, p. 310, Laing's Edition.

for the expansion of the Reformed Church.

For example in 1562 the receipts were in money, £49,956, and adding victuals, £72,491, and of this the church received only £23,920. Nearly £40,000 of the crown's share, however, went in pensions and remittances of thirds: the Earl of Moray drew the revenues of certain priories, but he paid no thirds. The only political purpose served by the residue was that £9,000 went to the royal guards, and £75 to Riccio. (1) The church got little, but unfortunately the crown's share was not carefully administered, and thus what Knox foresaw was likely to happen, the crown would get the three parts of the thirds, and the church would go a-begging.

---

In 1567 the prospect looked brighter for the church. The Earl of Moray was regent and his sincerity for the Reformed faith was well known. Anxious to do something for the ministers, he secured the passing of an Act in 1567 which declared that the first charge on the Thirds should be their stipends, and only if there was a surplus was the crown to receive anything. It was obvious, too, that the support

(1) Keith, Appendix.

of the Protestant party was essential against the Queen's party, for he also legislated that this was to be but a temporary arrangement to last only until they received their patrimony which is defined in the act as the teinds. But the difficulty of recovering the teinds was a formidable one. There were two kinds of teinds, (a) great teinds, from the corn crops, and (b) small teinds, from flax, farm and garden produce, calves, lambs, chickens and fish. The history of the teinds is a long and complicated one, but some account of it is necessary to make the position clear. From the 12th century they were devoted to the parish priest, but in practice this principle was modified by annexation or appropriation: parishes were annexed to great monastic houses, sees and collegiate churches. More than twice as many were thus attached as remained independent, and to carry out the parochial duties vicars or curates were appointed who received an allowance, ~~which was paid out of the teinds~~. This practice made the whole question of teinds very complicated, and the extrication of them for the new church far from easy. In addition, teinds had been leased out to tacksmen-- a recognised class of speculators, and parish priests had found it necessary to raise money by trafficking with such teinds as they had. As rectories and vicarages fell vacant, and the old vested interests disappeared the teinds should have been applied to the parochial ministers. But the patrons either uplifted the dues or introduced lay holders on the commendation principle who were liable only to



pay the third for the crown, but they frequently succeeded in obtaining dispensation. True it is that a certain proportion of the teinds came to the ministers through the thirds, but more was retained by the old possessors in their two-thirds. The hopes held out, then, by Moray in 1567, that the ministers would sometime get their patrimony were slender ones, and although they never ceased to demand all the teinds, they never succeeded. A scheme to extricate them was proposed by one of the Octavians, John Lindsay of Balcarres, in 1596, but as its success depended upon the ignoring of all previous annexations and impediments, it was found to be impracticable. The Act of Annexation of 1587 had excluded the teinds, but James' policy of erecting lordships had neutralised the exception and extrication became yearly mor<sup>e</sup> difficult. In fact he was never anxious to satisfy the ministers on this point because he had thus a powerful check on them, and used it to combat their political aspirations. (1)

Moray, then, had granted the ministers first claim on the thirds, and thus proved his willingness to help the new church, while the hope held out to them that they would ultimately obtain their teinds raised their spirits tremendously. Unfortunately, they were doomed to disappointment, and here again the poverty of the crown and its ~~inability to manage~~ the *inability to manage*

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 1, New Series, Introd., Masson.

nobles came into play. The nobles took advantage of the weakness of the Regent's position to depose the collectors and appoint others whom they could more easily control. The thirds brought in much less than they should, and both church and crown suffered. (1) And the state, too, was forced into the ranks of the enemies of the church. Moray, friendly as he was to the new faith, had to reduce the country to obedience to the king, a task of enormous difficulty, and in the poverty-stricken condition of the government, he was forced to draw on the thirds. The church made protests that the money assigned to stipends would not meet half the cost, in some cases not quarter, and realising how it was being cheated, it made a formal demand for absolute control of the collection and the administration of the tax. (2) Moray's dilemma was obvious; if he gave in to the church he would lose the support of the nobles, and that meant disaster for the regency. He therefore informed the ministers that the financial position of the government was such that, unless additional revenue was obtained from the thirds, taxation would be necessary, and Parliament would most certainly object to that. He reminded them that if the crown was weakened by lack of money then it could not give effective support to them

(1) Cook, Hist. of Sc. Ch., Vol. 1, p. 56.

(2) Row, Kirk of Sc., Vol. 2, p. 329.

in their campaign against heresy. It was obvious that crown and church were at the mercy of the barons, and therefore the best thing they could do was to make an amicable settlement. (1) Accordingly it was decided that a certain fraction of the thirds with 5,000 merks was to be given to the king and the regent, and if there was a surplus after the stipends had been paid, it was to be devoted to "Godly purposes" as agreed on by the Regent and the Assembly. (2) Thus the church agreed to a diminution of the thirds, and the ministers suffered a reduction in their stipends to help the state. (3) The partnership of church and crown was thus made a closer one; the church was committed to support the king, and the King to support Protestantism, and the alliance might have worked out to their mutual benefit, but for the fatal weakness of the government in giving away so much of its share in pensions, and its inability to see that the thirds were promptly and fully paid. Certainly one reason why the church had agreed to the change was the assurance from the Regent that the thirds would now be properly collected. The ministers, being weaker than the king's party found it increasingly difficult to obtain <sup>their</sup> ~~its~~ share; and both were being steadily defrauded by the holders of the lands setting the <sup>terinds</sup> ~~terinds~~ in tack. Knox saw what was coming, and warned the Assembly of the hard battle that would need

(1) Acts, Gen, Assy., Vol. 1, p. 151

(2) do. do. p. 173

(3) Calderwood, Vol. 2, p. 502.



to be fought against "the merciless devourers of the patrimony of the Kirk". (1)

On the death of Moray, who would probably have tried to improve matters, things became worse for the church; stipends were not regularly paid, and there were constant disputes with the holders of the <sup>benefice property</sup> ~~lands~~ about the thirds; the church was becoming poorer, while the king obtained no benefit. Realising now that, if the rapacity of the nobles was not stopped, the reformed church would be utterly ruined, the ministers began a campaign for the restoration of the whole of the patrimony, with the thought that the more they asked for the more they were likely to get. They informed the Regent Lennox that the revenues of the church were being given to "dumb dogs", and threatened to withdraw their support from the king's party unless something was done for them, but Lennox died before anything was arranged. Morton then used his influence to get the Estates to pass an act in 1571 by which the monastic lands held by laymen from superiors of convents were henceforth to be held from the crown. These laymen had from the first held their lands ~~mostly~~ mostly "in commendam" i.e. in life-rent, ~~on a lease for life or for years~~, but by this act these lands were now more easily converted into heritable lordships on payment of ~~they were now converted into temporal lordships with perfectly~~ a lump sum to the crown. ~~secure~~ titles, and so a large part of the old church lands was alienated from the new church beyond all hope of recovery. There was also the danger that the rest of the lands might

(1) Acts, Gen. Assy., Vol. 1, p. 199.

be lost in the same way. (1) To make matters worse the collection of the thirds had broken down, (2) and when the ministers petitioned Mar, they were told that nothing could be done until the polity of the church was settled. The first step <sup>towards definite Episcopacy</sup> ~~was to be taken~~ ~~was about to be taken~~ was about to be taken. It would be wrong to say that Mar was actuated solely by cupidity in this matter; we must always remember his difficulties-- money was urgently needed for the taking of Edinburgh Castle, and the greedy nobles of the king's party had to be bribed to continue in their allegiance. Again, Morton has been traditionally regarded as a man whose chief characteristic was avarice, but, dependant as he was on the English alliance, it was part of his policy to bring the Scottish church into line with that of England. All this however, does not mean that greed <sup>did not play</sup> ~~played~~ a large part in the negotiations which now opened, because Morton and the others felt uneasy in their possession of the church lands; such gifts as they had received from the regents were really illegal, and if bishops were ever restored they would become the legal owners and might sue for the past revenues. They planned, therefore, a restoration of the bishops on their own terms; the new bishops would be the nominal possessors of the sees and would collect the rents, but they would act as agents for

(1) Cook, Hist. of Ch. of Sc., Vol. 1, p. 158-9.

(2) do. do. do. p. 164.



for the nobles, to whom they would transmit the bulk of the money. By this means their possessions would be regularised. On the other hand, the ministers, tired of poverty, regarded the proposed change as a possible means of relief, and at least, they argued, with bishops, there would be a body of men in Parliament to watch over their interests. Some may even have hoped that, by consenting to the re-introduction of Episcopacy they might get back some of the lost lands, because the legal right to them depended on the existence of bishops. The view that the ministers consented to the change of polity in the hope that they would benefit financially has been attacked by the author of "Erskine of Dun", whose view is that they agreed because of a letter from the Regent to the effect that if they did not, then the already inadequate provision for stipends would be endangered. (1) In any case financial considerations were at the bottom of their action. In 1572 they were summoned to Leith to discuss the thirds, the poverty of the king and the proposed changes in polity. (2) Episcopacy was approved. The Presbyterians could have wrecked the scheme by refusing to admit the bishops, who alone could legally hold the lands, but their poverty was too acute, and thus came about the new ecclesiastical constitution "of the most motely and heterogeneous kind, being made up of Presbytery, Episcopacy and

(1) Crocket, <sup>t</sup>Erskine of Dun, p. 193.

(2) Cook, Hist. of Ch. of Sc., Vol. 1, p. 185.



Papal monkery". (1)

The ministers looked in vain for their reward, however. The Tulchan Bishops acted as willing tools in the hands of the men who secured their appointments, and who drew in most of the revenues. A weak government, a regency at the mercy of the powerful nobles, permitted this plundering of the church, and regarded it as a means of buying their support, which its poverty forbade it to do of itself.

Thus John Douglas was appointed Archbishop of St. Andrews, but he merely acted as agent for Morton who obtained the bulk of the revenues. Robert Montgomery was Tulchan Archbishop of Glasgow at a fixed salary, the rest being surrendered to the Earl of Lennox; in 1588 a member of the Mar family succeeded as a specimen of lay commendator. To Dunkeld Peter Rollok was appointed, and he was in reality a lawyer. Montrose secured the appointment of Andrew Graham as Bishop of Dunblane on the usual understanding. A Campbell was appointed to the see of Brechin, and the revenues were, in the main, transmitted to successive Earls of Argyle for forty years. (2)

(1) McCrie's Melville, Vol. 1, p. 148.

(2) Reg. P. C. New Series, Vol. 1, Introd., Masson.

In 1573 Morton found it necessary to win over the church, and he therefore passed a number of acts, which seemed to the ministers to be sincere steps in the direction of protecting the interests of both crown and church in connection with the thirds. Ostensibly to put a stop to the practice of forging deeds in the name of Queen Mary or of the Pope, granting possession of church lands to nobles, he enacted that all such deeds were to be brought before the Privy Council for the purpose of being examined. In practice, however, this act simply made it easier for these men to continue their policy of self aggrandisement at the expense of the partners; the composition of the body charged with the examination is a sufficient explanation. (1) He then made use of the fact that stipends were not only insufficient but uncertain. In about fifty cases they were under the 100 merk standard, (2) and an act was passed to secure a maximum stipend of 300 merks. Taking advantage of the fact that ministers were being forced to wait over long periods for the payment of their stipends, because the church collectors were unable to force payment, he now undertook to accept responsibility for the collection and prompt payment of the thirds, promising that the old system would

(1) Cook, Hist. of Ch. of Sc., Vol. 1, p. 217.

(2) Reg. P. C., New Series, Vol. 1, Introd. Masson.



be reverted to, should the church not be satisfied. Thus he obtained absolute control over the thirds, and by securing the appointment of individuals to several holdings he managed to add considerably to his wealth. (1)

How did the church fare under the new system? After some years' experience the ministers, in 1578, declared that it had worked so badly for them that they could tolerate it no longer, and they petitioned for a restoration of the old system. They met with refusal. (2) They saw the new Bishops alienating more and more of the church lands to the nobles, and, under the existing conditions of state control of the thirds, they saw little chance of their poverty being remedied. It was this that led them in 1580 to condemn Episcopacy as "the invention of man, folly and corruption". (3)

When we examine the Accounts of the Collector General of the Thirds, however, a difficulty arises. For 1576 the charge came to £51,694, and £33,425 was assigned to the church. The king's house and Dumbarton Castle accounted for only £2,579; only about 35% went on state purposes. Even allowing that the ministers' share was about £4,000 short of the 75% which they had declared to be their minimum, it does not seem that they were badly treated. (4) For 1577 the charge was £54,704, and in stipends alone, that is to say not counting grants for students and bursars, the church received £33,193.

(5)

(1) Cook, Hist. of Ch. of Sc., Vol. 1, p. 234.

(2) Acts, Gen. Assy., Vol. 2, p. 405. (3) Same, p. 453-5.

(4) Thirds, 1576, 24th Jany., 1578/9.

(5) do. 1577, 3rd Feby., 1578/9.



Evidently under the strong rule of Morton the collection was much more satisfactory, because there is an increase in the charge of £3,000, but the church received £232 less, 60% of the total instead of the 65% in 1576. On the other hand the receipts for 1578 fell, owing to the war, to £43,510, a drop of over £10,000, and yet £34,437 was assigned to stipends, an increase of £1,200, the king's house receiving only £622 as against £2,500 in the previous year. The church actually received 80% of the whole. (1) In 1579 the collection improved and reached £50,108, but the church received £600 less. (2) In 1580 there was a further improvement with a collection of £52,799, and the church obtained £4,000 more, £37,885. (3) The receipts in 1581 were £56,602, and stipends accounted for £37,051, or 60%. (4) It seems then, from these figures, ~~that~~ during the years when the church was complaining so bitterly of the evil results of the new system, and accusing the state of robbery, that, considering the enormous difficulties of the regency, the church was being fairly well, although not perhaps generously <sup>Treated</sup>. Does this mean that the church had become mercenary, and was anxious to raise stipends? Such a contention is not in accordance with the Book of Discipline, which laid down that "every minister should have sufficient

- (1) Thirds, 1578, 12th May, 1580.
- (2) do. 1579, 16th Febry., 1581/2.
- (3) do. 1580, 23rd Febry., 1586/7.
- (4) do. 1581, 24th Jany., 1586/7.

wherewith to keep a house, and be sustained in all things necessary, conform to his quality and the necessity of the time". (1) There was no extravagant claim made there, and there is no evidence that since that time they had become greedy. Again, the ministers must have acknowledged that under state control the collection had greatly improved. To explain the discrepancy between the complaints of the General Assembly and the Collector's figures is not easy, but we are apt to think that, while the amount assigned to stipends seems large, the ministers suffered great poverty through their stipends being often in arrears, and the fact that the audit of the accounts took place long after the collection tends to strengthen this view. Or it may be that the ministers saw the state getting considerable sums from what they regarded as their own property, and this angered them. Again their hostility to the crown may have been due to the fact that while the yield from the thirds was on the increase, they were not receiving their 75%; as the yield grew so did their needs, because the old church was not yet dead, and they required more and more money for their campaign against Catholicism and immorality. Every year they saw with indignation more and more of their patrimony being dissipated, while their schemes for relief of the poor and for the setting up of schools were being frustrated. At any rate, the church

(1) Cook, Hist. of Ref. Vol. 2, p. 404.



adopted an attitude of bitter hostility to Episcopacy and to the government largely because of financial considerations; the government had originated the enmity because its poverty forced it to seize on the thirds as one means of helping to fill a depleted treasury.

In 1580 the church again pleaded for its proper share of the thirds, and promised that if it was intrusted with the collection it would undertake to ensure a sufficient surplus to maintain the royal household. This was not an impossibility, it argued, if the king would revoke all the unnecessary pensions out of the thirds, and refuse to listen to "importunate solicitors of church revenues", (1) but the suggestion was too revolutionary: if adopted the king would have been deserted by many of his barons. Besides, James was not unnaturally anxious to know just how much the church proposed to allow him, and he doubted whether, if the church undertook the collection, it would be strong enough to get enough for the double purpose. Instead an alternative scheme was proposed by the king, which if carried out, would certainly have met the needs of the poor clergy. The 924 churches in Scotland were to be reduced to 600, with a minister in every church, with a fixed scale of salaries, varying with the importance of the charge: 100 were to get 500 merks, 200 300 merks, 200 £100, and 100 100 merks, or as it was qualified, "somewhat more or less". At the same

(1) Acts, Gen. Assy, Vol. 2, p. 461-2.



time a complete reorganisation was to take place. The 600 churches were to be grouped into 50 Presbyteries each with 12 churches, and 3 Presbyteries were to form a diocese.

This scheme was known as 'the platt', but "it vanished away (1) in smoke without any effect". It was impracticable, because it would have cost £120,000, a sum never attained by the thirds, and there could have been no 'superplus' for the crown. In any case the church refused to regard a guarantee of stipends as sufficient, and maintained its right to the whole of the patrimony, so that education and the poor might be provided for. (2)

Quarrels soon broke out again, this time because James was using the thirds to meet urgent political expenses, and this the church regarded as defrauding the ministers. To the Laird of Seegie he gave the tack of the thirds of Haddington, and to the Duke the Abbays of Aberbrothock and Holyrood, without making any provision for the stipends of the clergy of these places, while livings were being given to minors or turned into temporal lordships. (3) James returned the politician's answer that men who had been rendering special services to the state must be rewarded, and he had no other means at his disposal. He did admit, however, that this would not explain all his gifts, and

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 4, p. 91.

(2) Acts, Gen. Assy., Vol. 2, p. 480; Calderwood, 3, 516-21. Crocket, p. 245.

(3) Acts, Gen. Assy., Vol. 2, p. 632 et seq.

that the practice was harmful, but he confessed that he was unable to do anything to stop it. (1) In fact church and crown were too weak to prevent the wholesale robbery that was going on year after year; both were suffering, and unfortunately the crown was forced to countenance the abuse. The church in its misery could only repeat its melancholy plaint that "profane persons, even Papists" were "rugging" the patrimony from its rightful possessors, make wearisome demands for control of the thirds, or angrily denounce the right of the king to any share of them while ministers were in want. (2) They were further embittered when they thought how cunningly they had been deceived when they consented to the introduction of Episcopacy in the hope that they would benefit financially; instead they had found that "such as were clad with benefices" had been a chief instrument of their poverty. (3)

The official accounts of the thirds show that in 1582 the receipts were £56,076, the church receiving £38,629, an increase of nearly £1,600 on the previous year. (3) In 1583, even although the receipts had fallen to £48,013, the church's share was £40,856, over 85%. (4) But in 1584 the charge was £52,046 and the ministers received only £35,593, a decrease of over £5,200, the reason being that many ministers gave up their stipends rather than subscribe the

(1) Acts, Gen. Assy., Vol. 2, p. 644.

(2) do. do. p. 723.

(3) Thirds, 1582, 31st Jany., 1586/7.

(4) do. 1583, 28th March, 1586.



Black Acts. (1) But in 1585 when Arran was banished, and James evidently felt that his ascendancy over the church was sufficiently established, he was disposed to be more generous, and out of a charge of £58,546 stipends received £51,152. (2) Next year the charge again increased to (3) £61,934, but the church received only £45,428, which would have provided a stipend only one third of the one proposed in the platt. Thereafter the receipts continued to rise but the church did not share in the increased dividend. In 1588 the charge being £66,468, the church got £46,612. (4) In 1589 ..... £69,538, ..... £45,556. (5) In 1590 ..... £82,463, ..... £49,790. (6) It will be seen that as a result of the gradual extinction of the possessors of livings the whole was now falling in, the thirds were giving every year a greater revenue. The church, however, was <sup>not</sup> being granted an increase in proportion, and Calderwood complains that ministers were still being robbed of their stipends, and that churches were falling into ruins. (7)

James, however, could not afford to lose entirely the goodwill of the ministers, and there were intermittent negotiations about the platt. In 1592 the Assembly appointed

- (1) Thirds, 1584, 14th May, 1586.
- (2) do. 1585, 18th Mar., 1588/9.
- (3) do. 1586, 19th Mar., 1588/9.
- (4) do. 1588, 12th Aug., 1591.
- (5) do. 1589, do. do.
- (6) do. 1590, 3rd Jany., 1593/4.
- (7) Calderwood, Vol. 4, p. 656 et seq.



a committee to act with the king in drawing up a new platt, but it was 1596 before it defined its position in "a new and constant platt of planting all the kirks of Scotland". (1) James expressed a sincere desire to set the whole question of stipends upon a firm footing, even, he said, at the expense of his own share of the thirds. (2) The new platt repeated the whole list of their grievances, pointing out the great injustice they were suffering from when their stipends had uncertainly to be fought for from year to year at His Hienes' Exchequer out of the thirds with infinite process of law". The result would be the "utter wrack and destruction of the kirk be plain povertie", unless James passed an act restoring the thirds, and ceased giving gifts from the patrimony. If this were done, the church maintained, there would be enough to meet the demands on the tax. The negotiations, however, were frequently interrupted, and the fact that the king's power over church lands was at stake seems to have been a sufficient reason for their failure. Time and again, we find the Assembly demanding the completion of the business and bringing forward new arguments in support of their claim; the poverty of the church was having grave national results in that there was a serious defection from purity and zeal because of so many churches being closed; there was not a sufficient provision for the religious education of the community; qualified teachers could not be obtained, and

(1) Acts, Gen. Assy, Vol. 3, p. 878.

(2) do. do. do. p. 867.

secular education was suffering. Again the remedy was laid down, that the king need only keep the thirds "invitiat". (1) Nothing was done, however, to meet these demands, and at the end of our period the quarrel was still going on, the king on his part making allegations that the platt was being hindered by the negligence of the church in failing to make the necessary returns. (2) The partnership of crown and church established at the beginning of the Reformation had been humiliating and irksome for the <sup>former</sup> ~~former~~, but for the latter it had meant ruin.

There was one solution of the problem, which would have pleased the church, placed the king in a strong position, and ended the antagonism between them; this was the annexation to the crown of all the lands which had been incorporated by the nobles in their estates. In the time of Morton the Presbyterian section had protested against laymen holding ecclesiastical property, and pointed out that if this was annexed, the church would get the teinds, and the crown would be supported by the rents of the lands. They reminded him in 1579 that the abbacies held by the Lords John and Claud Hamilton had become vacant by their flight, and here was an opportunity to begin the policy. But much as it would have benefited the crown, the abbacies fell into the hands of the Earl of Lennox. (3) In 1584, however, a beginning was

(1) Acts, Gen. Assy., Vol. 3, p. 964-6, 1601.

(2) do. do. pp. 982, 999. 1602.

(3) Reg. P. C., Vol. 3, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1579. h. 76.  
2nd



actually made by acts passed saying that all prelaties vacant at that time, or which might fall vacant thereafter, were to pay their first fruits to the king, while all benefices worth £1,000 were to pay £200 annually to the king, the others in proportion. Further all the "portiones of the persones of the conuentes of the abbayes, priories and nunries that hes deceased since 1560" were assigned to the crown. All abbacies were to pay as many portions as they had monks living in 1560. (1) In 1584 so desperate were the finances that the vast amount of church lands still not definitely appropriated by the nobles was regarded as a possible remedy, and an act of that year annexed the temporalities of benefices to the crown. The preamble gave as the reasons, first, that the greatest part of the crown revenues had been given by his predecessors to the church, and so "the king had not sufficient means to bear forth the honour of his estate", and second, that, anxious not to impose taxation, he must have recourse to his own patrimony". (2) This act meant that the lands became the king's, and the tithes and a few acres of glebe were left for the support of the Presbyterian minister. To both partners it seemed that great advantages would arise; the church imagined that the lazy bishops would be deprived of their emoluments, ministers would be assured of a modest but settled stipend, and that the way would be paved for the

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 7, 148, 29th May, 1584.

(2) Raft, Sc. Parlts., p. 487. Acts, Vol. 3, 431.



abolition of episcopacy, because there would not be enough land to maintain the bishops; the king believed that he would obtain enough money from this act to end his poverty. But both were grievously disappointed, for to secure the passing of such an act, some compromise had to be made to placate the vested interests which had arisen since the Reformation. This was accomplished by a great number of exceptions: the act did not apply to temporal lordships already erected. For example in 1581 Lord Ruthven became Earl of Gowrie and received the Scone lands, and in spite of the forfeiture of 1584, the lordship was restored to the family in 1586. Other exceptions were Deer, in favour of Robert Keith; Newbattle for Lord Kerr; Paisley for Lord Claud Hamilton; Musselburgh (part of Dunfermline) <sup>for</sup> ~~to~~ Sir John Maitland of Thirlestane, the Secretary; Broughton (part of Holyrood) for Sir Lewis Bellenden, Justice Clerk; Pluscarden for Alexander Seton, Lord Urquhart, Earl of Dunfermline. Included in the list of exceptions were the remaining parts of Dunfermline and Holyrood and almost all the lands of Arbroath, Kelso, Coldingham and Lesmahago; Kirk lands and revenues already assigned to hospitals and schools or colleges; all existing rights of lay patronage in benefices, and all infeftments and pensions already granted out of the annexed lands. With these exceptions James became the superior of the feuars, but although he should have received the revenues from

them direct, the lay commendators approached him with offers of bribes to allow them to keep their positions, and then they brought pressure to bear upon him to convert their holdings into temporal lordships. The great year for these erections came in 1606, when James was anxious to restore episcopal property for his Anglican church, and so many of the monastic benefices became lordships by erection. The most important exception as far as the ministers was concerned was that the teinds were not annexed; this was designed to placate them and the people; the act dealt with 'temporalities' teinds were 'spiritualities'. But as it turned out the ministers did not profit much by the act; they were very difficult to extricate, because of the number of changes that had taken place. Litigation about them was endless, and right up to the end of the reign the matter was still in confusion.

(1)

No wonder James called the Act of Annexation a "vile act".(2)

A fine opportunity had been lost to enrich the crown and only the courtiers had benefited. By 1587 every acre of the patrimony had been appropriated, and the new church had become a pensioner of the king, receiving a small dole out of what had once been her own. The church had been plundered, but the booty had been squandered. (3) That James realised his mistake is certain, and he made an attempt in 1598 to remedy it, but there were too many "interressit", and the scheme dropped. (4) The attempt made by Charles was fatal. As the writer of the Anonymous History says, "Geve these temporall lands had bene appropriat to the crown, it had bene a great benefite to the present prence and to all his successours in tyme coming". (5)

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. 1, New Series, Introd., Masson.

(2) Bas. Dor., II, p. 43.

(3) Cunningham, Vol. 1, p. 473.

(4) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 8, B.485.

(5) P. 232. He also suggests that failing actual annexation, the sums offered to James by the possessors should have been invested so as to yield annual revenue. James' poverty prevented this.



This quarrel between church and crown had very important results. The Presbyterians, defrauded by the nobles of the patrimony -- a thing for which they blamed the crown-- and by the crown of its proper share of the thirds, saw that their poverty would mean for them a complete loss of influence in the country. The powers once exercised by the Catholic Church they had lost, and they were forced to take other steps to prevent utter extinction; they therefore engaged in a struggle with the crown for political power. They feared they might become "as insignificant as they were already indigent". (1) Their first act of defiance arose out of the question of Episcopacy, and in 1580 the General Assembly condemned it as a system of church government in Scotland; they presumed to ignore the rights of Parliament, and to dictate to the sovereign. They met with a surprising amount of success at first, because next year the ~~xxxxx~~ king legally confirmed the Presbyterian polity, but this success was only temporary, and was due to the fact that the king required the help of the church. Parliament refused to follow out the king's promise. As the king increased in strength he was able to take up a stronger attitude and secure the establishment of a complete Episcopalian church. His policy is explained by his famous remark at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, " Scottish Presbytery agreeth as well

(1) Sir Walter Scott, Hist. of Sc., Vol. 2, p. 210.



with a monarchy, as God and the Devil". Strangely enough therefore, the policy of the Presbyterian party, which had been forced upon it by its poverty, helped to bring about the destruction of Presbyterianism.

In reality the reign should be regarded as the record of the gradual development of the <sup>episcopal</sup> Anglican form of church government, because although there are breaks in the continuity of the story, these are explained by the fact that at times the government required the support of the church, and passed laws in its interests. Thus it had been invaluable in helping to maintain order during James' absence on his wedding tour, and out of gratitude he was preparing to do something for them in regard to stipends, but before anything could be arranged the murder of the Earl of Moray took place, and this so incensed the people that he had to be more generous still. Accordingly the acts of 1592 were passed legalising Presbyterianism, for a time. *But it may be that the demands of the Church for repeal of the Act of 1587 and for better financial treatment, demands which James could not afford to satisfy, are the chief cause of the concession.*

Another striking illustration of the close connection between finance and the king's ecclesiastical policy is found near the close of the period, when all that James required to make his church system complete was representation of the clergy in Parliament. The ministers were induced to approve of this on the understanding that, with the Bishops in Parliament, the interests of the lower clergy would be watched over and adequate stipends would be obtained. In 1600 various checks were imposed, and one of these was that the

new Bishops should be content with such part of the revenues of their sees as the king assigned to them. Once again the poverty of the ministers, for which the crown was largely responsible, explains their acceptance of a step necessary for the establishment of the ecclesiastical system they abhorred. The Archbishop of St. Andrew's had proved himself a true prophet when he warned Knox that, when he was changing the doctrine of the church, he should have retained its polity as the only possible means of retaining its wealth. If bishops had been retained in the Scottish church they would have remained the legal possessors of its property, but when they were abolished, there were no legal possessors; the lands were plundered, and in the attempt to win them back Presbyterianism fell. (1)

---

This survey of the results of James' poverty upon the domestic history of the reign leaves us with a picture of a king living in a constant state of worry and distress over the question of ways and means. It is probably this that was in his mind when, in his "Poetical Exercises" he apologised for the "many incorrect errors both of dytement and orthography, because my burden is so great and continuall without any intermission, that when any ingyne and age could, my affairs and fasherie will not permit me to remark the wrong orthography committed by the copies of my unlegible and rugged hand, yea scarcely but at stolen moments have I the leisure

(1) Cook, Hist. of the Ref., Vol.2, p. 406.

to blenk upon any paper, and yet nocht that with free and unvexed spirit". (1) The same thoughts he expressed in Basilicon Doron, when he wrote that "a king must be so busied in the active part of his charge, that he will not be permitted to bestow many hours upon contemplation", (2) and that "being borne to be a king, ye are rather borne to 'onus' than 'honos'", (3) Is it fair, then, to regard him as a failure? Should we not make generous allowance for his difficulties when we are estimating his abilities as a statesman?

- (1) R. Chambers' Life of Jas. VI. Vol. 1, p. 177.
- (2) Bas. Dor., p. 146.
- (3) do. do. p. 138.



## Chapter IV.

### The Results of James' Poverty on his Foreign Policy.

- (1) Under the regents. Elizabeth buys control.
- (2) Personal rule of James. His great opportunity. The financial difficulty. The intrigues of the barons.
- (3) James' inconsistency. Finance an explanation. His dealings with England, France, Spain, Rome and the Low Countries. His deceit.
  - (a) Till 1586.
  - (b) From the execution of Mary till 1603.
- (4) Criticism.

## Chapter IV. The Results of James VI's Poverty on his Foreign Policy.

---

"Money is the man in Scotland". (Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 3  
p. 941, 14th Sept., 1571)

---

During the whole reign the question of finance is a very important, often a deciding factor, in foreign policy. Outwardly it seemed that the religious question had been settled, that Scotland was Protestant, but Roman Catholicism was far from dead, and could Mary's party only secure the control of the chief strongholds, it would again be established, the old alliance with France would be renewed, and the work of the Treaty of Edinburgh would be undone. Here, then, was Elizabeth's danger, because the victory of a pro-French party in Scotland might entail an invasion of England in the interests of Mary, and she was therefore forced to strive for the maintenance of a pro-English party, the "King's Men". This could only be accomplished by sending a steady supply of money, not only to bribe the greedy barons, but also to convert the regents into her paid servants. These men, knowing how all-important their alliance was to her, could afford to place a high value on their friendship, because, if she declined to meet their demands, there were always the Catholic powers of Europe, especially France and Spain, to whom application could be made. The threat to do so was often the weapon employed by the Scots to raise the money value of their alliance in the eyes of the English queen; but, on the other hand, Elizabeth's position was strengthened by the knowledge that these countries had their own difficulties to contend with, and that they were always suspicious of a Scot's promise, and were chary of sending any money to that needy country. Consequently she could treat the threats as mere tricks to extract better terms, although frequently she endangered the success of her whole schemes by her niggardliness. She was, however, usually very generous with her promises of financial help, and on the whole during the regency she managed to control not only Scotland's domestic policy, but its foreign policy also. The story begins with the first regent.



## The Regency of the Earl of Moray, 1567-1570.

Moray, faced with the difficult task of establishing the king's government in a country, one half of which refused to recognise it, had very few real helpers. His lack of impartiality in his dealings with the late king's murderers; his haughtiness in his treatment of the barons, and his stern rule in the Borders made him unpopular, and it was only by bribing men like Morton that he could keep a party round him. In these circumstances Elizabeth's gold was a necessity to him, and to obtain it he became a very humble suppliant. Fearing to offend her he was careful to sign all his letters to her, "James Stewart", because "James, Regent", while it appears in his letters to Cecil, might have seemed like claiming an equality with the imperious queen. On one occasion, indeed, he accidentally began "James, Regent", but altered it to the humbler form. (1)

In 1569 he received from England a loan of £5,000 (2) sterling, to be used in crushing the opposing faction, and as a result he was bombarded with letters giving him minute instructions in regard to his policy. When he did not, or could not obey Elizabeth's instructions, he was accustomed to receive letters of remonstrance from her couched in the forceful style of which she was so accomplished an exponent. "It is for you to solicit favours from us, and not to use the matter as if there were any equality between us and you". "Speedily consider better of your proceedings". "Satisfy us speedily". "Our goodwill not recoverable by repentance". "We require you peremptorily to cease the siege of Dumbarton". "We require you to forbear". Such are the phrases that occur in the letters from the queen to the regent, and they illustrate how effectively she had turned him into the paid agent. In return he used to reply that he would humbly accept whatever she pleased to write with that reverence whereto he was obliged. He was often nervous lest he should have offended her through delay in answering her letters; "I pray you" wrote he on one occasion to Cecil, "move her majesty not to think ill of the short delay". (3)

Sometimes he adopted an argumentative tone, as in 1569, when he pleaded that the business of crushing the Catholic earls was as much her business as his, and that therefore she ought to send him money more speedily, his own burden being so heavy; if Elizabeth would but meet the total expense then the whole force of the country would be employed as she thought fit to direct. (4)

- (1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 2, Bain, Introduction. p. xxx.
- (2) do. Vol. 2, 18th Jany., 1569.
- (3) do.
- (4) do. Vol. 2, Tytler, Vol. 3, p. 318.





In the beginning of the next year Nicholas Elphinstone was sent to Cecil with instructions to say that if the Queen desired to make any profit out of the government of Scotland she must take upon herself the cost of the protection of the young king and the Protestant faith; he therefore asked for £1,000 to meet the debts already contracted, and a similar sum every year in addition to munitions of which there was great scarcity. In return for this the regent was prepared to serve Elizabeth as Scotsmen were "accustomed to do their native princes in Scotland and out of England upon reasonable wages". (1) He consented also to deliver up to her the Earl of Northumberland who had sought refuge in Scotland, although he said it was an unnatural thing to deliver a man to slaughter.

With the murder of Moray, indeed, Elizabeth lost a valuable ally and willing servant, and even after his death she took an interest in his affairs, because much of his money had been expended upon state business, and she took his widow and children under her protection. The regency had brought him neither wealth nor ease. He has been condemned (2) for his lack of patriotic principle because of his ignominious offers to England, but this is a harsh judgment: financial assistance from Elizabeth was a necessity, and if he did sell control of the country's policy he himself did not gain by it.

#### The Regency of the Earl of Lennox, 1570-1571.

The death of Moray seemed at first to spell ruin for the English party in Scotland: the Queen's party were now very strong, and, feeling confident of success with the castles of Dumbarton and Edinburgh in their possession, and France and Spain were making preparations to assist them in order to accomplish the destruction of Elizabeth. In these circumstances an English party was an absolute necessity, and three days after the murder of Moray Sir Thomas Randolph was sent north to revive the party, and he succeeded in securing the appointment of Lennox as regent, a man already an English pensioner.

The new regent and his party realised from the first that they were utterly dependant on Elizabeth's help, that, in fact, the king held his throne during her pleasure. Early in May, 1570, a month before his appointment, he

Tytler, Vol. 3, p. 319.  
 (1) ~~Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 2, 2nd July, 1570.~~  
 (2) Tytler, Vol. 3, p. 321.



~~==~~

wrote the first of a long series of begging letters to his benefactor, asking her to take pity upon his poverty, and send him some more money. (1) So poor was he that he was soon forced to borrow £300 from Randolph, (2) and as this money could only go a very small way towards meeting his expenses, he wrote to Morton asking him to send some money on to Stirling because his troops were demanding their wages, and he found it very difficult to satisfy them. (3) A fortnight later he wrote in apologetic terms to Randolph requesting "some support of money for paying my light horsemen whose time is run out four days ago" and the footmen had to be paid within a week. (4) He was advanced another £100. (5) When he was preparing for the siege of Edinburgh he wrote to Elizabeth reporting his military weakness: he had four hundred foot and fifty horse at Dalkeith, and about the same number in the capital, and a hundred men had landed from Denmark. He had paid them enough to satisfy them for a short time in the hope that a supply of money would arrive from England, but, should it not come, these men would desert to the enemy, and the barons, thinking that Elizabeth had deserted them, would do the same. (6) The Castle must be taken, but "wageit force we are not able to sustain on Scottish rents", and he was compelled to ask her to advance sufficient money monthly to meet his whole military expenditure. Morton was at the same time in receipt of English gold, and in one of his letters to Elizabeth he coaxingly suggested that many other nobles would join the party "gif hir majesties helplic hand salbe knawin to be halding to yis actioun". (7) In August, 1571, Lennox had again occasion to thank the queen for her help, but he also argued that he was spending his all on the wars, his wife and children were in continual poverty, his mind tormented and his heart oppressed with cares and griefs, and unless she continued to help him according to his "reasonable expectatioun" he would be forced to give up the struggle. (8)

It is not surprising that the people of Scotland were spoken of as a race who would do "something for goodwill, but very much for money". (9)

- (1) Tytler, Vol. 3, p. 328.
- (2) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 3, 24th July, 1570.
- (3) do. Vol. 3, 31st July, 1570.
- (4) do. Vol. 3, 17th August, 1570.
- (5) do. Vol. 3, 10th. Septr., 1570.
- (6) do. Vol. 3, 28th May, 1571.
- (7) do. Vol. 3, 23rd August, 1571.
- (8) do. Vol. 3, 25th August, 1571.
- (9) do. Vol. 3, 4th Septr., 1571.



The Regency of the Earl of Mar, 1571-2.

Morton was the real power behind the regent in this period, and as long as he was kept in funds by Elizabeth she could rely on a party to do her bidding. Mar was appointed on the 5th September, 1571, and nine days later we find Drury writing to Burghley that "money was the man in Scotland", and asking that some be sent to pay the king's troops. He enclosed a letter written by Mar, who quite truthfully remarked that he knew so well his necessity that there was no need to speak at length on the matter, and he contented himself with saying, "I will effectuously require you to use your goodwill for obtaining of money to pay our soldiers". (1) As Mar had begun, so he continued through the whole period of his regency, and so faithfully did he carry out the instructions of his mistress that he earned the name of "the English regent". (2) Occasionally, however, when English money was slow in coming, Drury, Elizabeth's agent, had some anxious moments, never knowing exactly how long he could depend on the constancy of his party, because there was always the danger that lack of money might force them to come to terms with France. As he reported to Burghley, (1) "If the regent and his adherents have not cause to speak English, they will presently give themselves to speak French", and it was this danger that led Elizabeth to adopt the policy of supplying the money in two ways; the larger sums were remitted to Mar direct, while to Drury were sent smaller sums, which were to be given to Mar only if a personal request were made for them, but if no application were made then Drury was to comfort the Scots with "good words". (3) But this niggardliness had serious disadvantages: when the money did arrive it was speedily swallowed up in meeting arrears of pay, and the regent was still faced with the task of taking the Castle with a force ridiculously inadequate and a treasury always empty. The wiser policy was that advocated by Hundson that enough money should be sent to end the business, because till then the Scots would never stop craving it. (4) Thus Drury received £1,000 with which to relieve Mar's poverty, and he wondered how it was possible to make this serve the turn as there was already

- (1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 3, 14th Septr., 1571.
- (2) do. Vol. 3, 30th Septr., 1571.
- (3) do. Vol. 4, 4th Octr., 1571.
- (4) do. Vol. 4, 27th Novr., 1571.



4.

a month's pay of £1,200 owing to the men. (1) As the war went on renewed demands for money and munitions were made, and it was pointed out that without these the struggle could not be carried on. By March 1572 Mar was £3,000 in debt, and the English representative wrote to Elizabeth earnestly beseeching her to pay this and put an end to the business; it was a fine opportunity to earn the name of 'mater' to Scotland, to consolidate her influence there, because the people were so miserable that their only hope next to God was in Elizabeth. (2) But up to the end of the regency of Mar, England persisted in the policy of sending as little as possible, so that the army was always in arrears, and the victory over the "Queen's Men" had still to be won. But a sufficient quantity of money had been sent to give Elizabeth the right to continue her control over the government, and in fact it would be no exaggeration to say that Elizabeth was the real ruler of the country, or at least of that part which was under the authority of the young king. She issued instructions as to the conduct of the war, naturally, but she also interfered in other matters: the following commands appear in her letters: (3) "We require you to show favour to the Bishop of Caithness that he may enjoy his priory of St. Andrews", "to fulfil the intention of the late regent in the bestowing of the Bishopric of Glasgow towards the redemption of the lands of the earldom of Lennox, which were mortgaged by the said earl by occasion of his services". It was Elizabeth who drew up the articles of pacification of 1572, and took advantage of the country's weakness to demand that "the king and council shall do all things that the queen of England may in reason demand to bind them to a perpetual amity with her, and there shall be no offensive alliance against her". (4)

But a more extraordinary result of the alliance of the pro-English party with England, and one that sheds an illuminating light on the atmosphere of the time is brought out in what the documents simply call "the great matter", which, according to Tytler, was a plot, by which Mary, Elizabeth's awkward prisoner, was to be smuggled into Scotland, and there disposed of by the regent and his party. Towards the end of 1572 Killigrew was sent

- (1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 4, 16th Octr. 1571.
- (2) do. Vol. 4, 22nd Novr., 7th March, April, 23rd Sept., 1572.
- (3) do. Vol. 4, 24th Novr., 1571.
- (4) do. Vol. 4, 31st Jany., 1572.



to arrange the affair, relying on the promise of money to bring the regent and Morton to agree to the proposal. (1) He reported that he had done what he could to encourage the regent by giving him to hope that Elizabeth would help him in all his expenses, "which he liked well". Mar, of course, tried to make as much as possible out of the affair, and demanded that the money spent on the maintenance of Mary in England should, when the business was completed, be applied to the preservation of the young king. (2) Morton promised that Mary should not live three hours after her arrival in Scotland, and in fact the plot might have been carried out, but for the delays caused by the rivalry between Mar and Morton, both anxious to make the greater profit out of the matter, and the sudden death of Mar himself. (3)

### The Regency of the Earl of Morton. 1572-1578.

Under Morton, "ung faulx renard avec beaucoup d' argent", the story of Scotland's loss of independence continued, because the king's party could only claim the victory when Edinburgh Castle fell, and that was possible only with the help of Elizabeth. Killigrew, the English representative in Edinburgh, set the ball rolling by pointing out the necessity of sending money to Morton, whom he rightly called "a shrewd fellow", especially since he feared that French offers were being made, although he had been assured that the regent meant to run the English course as much as any regent before him. (4) Morton himself about the same time wrote promising obedience to Elizabeth if money was sent; (5) when that failed he adopted the plan of working upon the fears of Killigrew so that he felt compelled to warn his mistress, that the party was beginning to suspect her, and were turning to France for relief. (6) This policy was so successful that before the end of the year English engineers were sent to report on the best methods of taking the Castle, and a sum of £2,500 was sent to Killigrew for distribution among the regent's party. Thus again the country was reduced to the state of a province under England, and, as Maitland and Grange said to La Mothe Fenelon in a letter asking for French money, "the regent and his adherents are already rendered the devoted slaves" of the English queen. (7) But the "devoted slaves" could

(1) Tytler, Vol. 3, p. 346.

(2) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 4, 28th Octr., 1572.

(3) Tytler, Vol. 3, p. 351.

(4) Letter of Killigrew, 10th Decr, 1572, Tytler, 3, p. 354.

(5) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 4, 1st Decr., 1572.

(6) do. Vol. 4, 10th Decr., 1572.

(7) do. Vol. 4, 17th Jany., 1573.



~~Es.~~

not be relied on for any length of time: their devotion lasted only as long as the English money, and so Killigrew was kept in a constant state of excitement between the time of the dispatch of the begging letters and the receipt of the money. His experience prompted him to advise Elizabeth that the sum required to keep Scotland at her devotion was £1,200 a year, £500 for the regent, £200 for Huntly and Argyle, £100 each for Boyd and Adam of Gordon, and so on, and he added the warning that if she did not entertain these men France certainly would. (1)

Probably Elizabeth thought that when Edinburgh Castle fell in May 1573 the necessity for sending money to Scotland would cease, and that she could rely on the promises of fidelity made by Morton to ensure her against the French danger. But, instead, demands for money still continued to come, because Morton could plead that her assistance was still required to provide against a possible revival of the Catholic party, and on the other hand it was always easy to drop hints of French offers being received. This new phase soon opened, for in June 1573 we find Killigrew writing to advise the granting of pensions to keep the party faithful before the French had time to practise with them, (2) Morton about the same time informing Burghley that he must have an army, and that since he could not pay for it himself "his lippening" was that Elizabeth would assist him. (3) There was little to be obtained from the king's rents, he said, because the king was so much in the debt of his officers as a result of the extravagance of his mother, and the expenses of the civil war, that for a long time to come Morton could expect little "relief that way". (4) So great was the regent's greed that he even suggested that "the great matter" should again be considered, but this time he insisted on payment in advance. Elizabeth would not agree to these terms, and as Tytler so well expresses it, "Mary owed her life to the parsimony of Elizabeth and the avarice of the regent". (5)

In the beginning of 1575 Elizabeth rather neglected Scottish affairs, and Morton's appeals were left unanswered, so he retaliated by cultivating the friendship of the

- (1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 4, 14th Mar., 1573.
- (2) do. Vol. 4, 13th June, 1573.
- (3) do. Vol. 4, 26th June, 1573.
- (4) do. Vol. 4, 15th Novr., 1573.
- (5) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 6.



French party, especially the Hamiltons, but, before he had definitely committed himself, he fell from power and the personal reign of James VI began, in 1578.

### The Foreign Policy of James the Sixth.

James now began to manage the affairs of the country himself, but at first there was very little change in the relations between the two countries; Morton for a time recovered his influence, and then after his execution in 1581, there was a succession of favourites, who were as ready to accept English gold as ever the regents had been; and the extravagance and financial mismanagement of James made him ready to accept the position of paid servant of the English queen-- until he found a higher bidder.

It became increasingly more difficult for Elizabeth to manage Scotland, for James was aware that in the critical position of affairs in Europe, Scotland's policy had become a matter of great importance, and that England was not the only power anxious for an alliance with him. We know how ambitious James was after 1603 to play an important, even a controlling part in European politics, but it is not so well known that even at this period he was anxious to earn a name for himself, and fully aware of the great opportunities that presented themselves to him owing to the peculiar value of his alliance in the eyes of Europe. It was the time when Catholic Europe was engaged in the struggle to win back the territory lost by the Reformation; England, the strongest Protestant country, was the chief enemy, and Elizabeth the arch-heretic. If Scotland could be brought back into the Catholic fold, then a terrible blow could be dealt at England, because while a direct attack was being made from the south, she could also be invaded by the back-door. For this purpose, of course, James must be converted, and at times this seemed about to happen. So began the long struggle between England and Catholic Europe for control of Scotland: England prepared to pay a high price for the maintenance of the Protestant faith in that country, and for the continuance of the Anglo-Scottish alliance; the other side prepared to buy the king's conversion and the rupture of the friendly relations between the two kingdoms. Both sides were well aware that the best way to secure their ends was to appeal to the well-known poverty of the king.

Here, then, was a situation that appealed strongly to the young monarch as a fine opportunity for displaying to the world his command of the rules of diplomacy, but unfortunately James' poverty was a powerful enemy preventing the realisation of his ambitions. Just as his inability to pay for the upkeep of a bodyguard rendered him weak at

~~65~~

home, so did his inability to pay his foreign ambassadors weaken him abroad. For example, when in 1583 Seton was sent to France, it looked as if he would have to go at his own charges, because James could not raise the money.

(1) So important was the business that James tried all he could; Angus, who had received some of Morton's fortune, was asked to meet the expense, but declined. Seton was then sent with a letter from the king to the Provost of Edinburgh requesting eight hundred crowns and a ship, but the cautious council was in no hurry to oblige the king, and first asked the advice of other burghs "who neither liked the journey nor agreed to meet" the expense. The departure of the ambassador was delayed until the city was brought round to agree to the proposal but even then the money was only very slowly subscribed.

(2) Delays such as these together with the poor appearance of the Scottish representatives at the foreign courts, and their inability to maintain a party there to help them in their work, must all have hampered the young king very seriously. Sometimes ambassadors were appointed who themselves could furnish the necessary money, as for example when George Keith, Earl Marischal, was sent to Denmark in 1589. (3)

Nor was this his only difficulty. James was regarded by his fellow monarchs as a person not worth considering. It was the exiled Mary on whom the Pope, the King of Spain and the Duke of Parma depended for the accomplishment of their plans, "for in very truth, they nothing respect your son", Parsons told Mary. (4) He was not looked upon as the rightful king of Scotland, and indeed he might at any time be deposed in favour of his mother, and thus before he could expect to play an important part in the politics of Europe he had first to prove his importance and his right to be regarded as the only one who could speak for Scotland.

Mary was not his only rival. Europe knew that his poverty placed him at the mercy of his aristocracy, that he was king only as long as they pleased, and they seem to have resolved that as they could receive very little from him they should look abroad for gain. The result was that they themselves carried on intrigues with

(1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, 13<sup>th</sup> Novr., 1583.

(2) do. Vol. 6, 9<sup>th</sup> Novr., 1583.

(3) Reg. Privy Council, Vol. 4, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1589, footnote p. 391

(4) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol 7, 10<sup>th</sup> Septr., 1584.



foreign monarchs, caring little whether or not they were running counter to the king's policy. It is possible that in order to buy freedom from these hampering intrigues, James was forced to continue his seemingly foolish policy of alienating his property to the nobles.

To take a few examples of this. In 1578 Elizabeth had succeeded in winning over James to an English alliance, but she found that all her trouble and expense were likely to prove wasted, for many of the Scottish nobles had begun negotiating with France, and were likely to force the king to break off the English friendship. She was warned that pensions must be given to them, or else she must expect failure. (1) Bernardino de Mendoza explained the "natural inconstancy" of the Scottish people by a reference to their poverty; he said that he had been receiving offers of help from the Scottish nobles and along with Cardinal de Granville he advised Philip to grant pensions to James' advisers, who, "being needy, will be content with little". (2) Mary, knowing Scotland well, advised the granting of 12,000 ducats a year in pensions for nobles, and though small, the sum would "create a great stir, because money is scarce". (3) In Paris the Scottish nobles were spoken of as pensioners of the King of Spain, betraying their king and the best interests of their country; (4) an Englishman spoke of them as men who would "take from any prince to the ruin of their king, country and religion." (5)

A less ~~able~~<sup>adroit</sup> man might have given way under such great disadvantages, but James was able to make a brave show nevertheless, and in fact he played Elizabeth's own game with a fair amount of success, playing one side off against the other, raising his price to each in turn. If we admire Elizabeth's cunning, because by it she saved her country from France and Spain, must we withhold our admiration from James when he copied her? We must admit, however, that while Elizabeth followed the usual interpretation of Machiavelli's "Prince" from patriotic motives, James was largely mercenary in his policy, so that we find running through his negotiations not only evidences of double-dealing (that is natural), but many indications that finance was the determining factor.

(1) Letters and S. Papers, James VI, Abbotsford Club, Septr., 1578.

(2) Cal. S. Papers, Span., Vol. 3, 3rd Mar., 9th Feby., 1582.

(3) do., 4th July, 1582.

(4) Cal. S. Papers, Foreign, 16, 13th Jany., 1581.

(5) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 9, 5th Mar., 1589.



So much was this the case that the common opinion of Scotland held by Europeans was that her people were "notorious for disloyalty and falseness. They will do anything for money". (1) James was "that false Scotch urchin." (2)

# I. Foreign Policy till 1586.

"Naturally a deep dissembler". ( Cal. S. Papers, Foreign, Mar. 21st, 1583.)

From the time of James' taking up personally the control of the country's foreign policy until the critical year of the execution of Mary, the chief interest lies in the struggle of France and England for control of James.

Early in 1580 the Secret Council was anxiously considering every possible means of relieving the poverty of the monarch, and seeing little hope from within, they resolved to see what the rival powers would offer. It was agreed that England should be approached first, because of the help that country had given during the regency, but it was deemed advisable to begin coquetting with France in the hope that something tangible would come of it, or that at least French promises could be used as a means of raising the value of the Scottish friendship in Elizabeth's eyes. Accordingly Bowes, the English representative, was approached by James and the Comptroller, and asked to inform his government of the urgent need for sending speedy financial assistance; in return there was a promise that Elizabeth would have the right to advise James in his financial administration. (3) The scheme worked well at first, because Bowes wrote advising the English queen to grant James a bounty, and so win an interest in him and his country. He advised that a loan would be better than a gift, for prominent nobles and merchants would be required to stand as sureties for repayment, and so she would acquire a strong influence over the king. (4)

Not long after this similar negotiations were begun with France, and here there was offered in return for monetary assistance the promise of the king's conversion to Roman Catholicism. This proposal was entertained at the

(1) Cal. S. Papers, Span., Vol. 2, 376.

(2) do. do., Vol. 3, 7th Novr., 1581.

(3) Bowes Correspondence, p. 57, 10th May, 1580.

(4) do. p. 65, 16th May, 1580.



French court, which declared its willingness to send James a sum equal in amount to the total revenue of Scotland less charges, if he on his part would make a declaration of his change of faith, (1) and later a more definite offer of a yearly pension of 30,000 crowns in addition to the money sent annually to Mary if she consented, was made. (2) This was tempting enough to James; but a public conversion would ruin any chances of getting money from England, and of succeeding to the English throne, so it was thought advisable to wait the result of the English negotiations. Once again the old game was being played, but unfortunately for the success of James' policy, both France and England were well aware of what was going on, and felt that there was no need to hurry matters; Elizabeth indeed professed that if James intended to ally with France, it mattered little because England was strong enough to stand alone. (3) She therefore declined to lend him money without security, but did send him many fair promises, to which the disappointed James refused to listen. (4) There was nothing for it but to turn again to France, whose proposal he had very cleverly never definitely refused, but the result was not very encouraging: a present came from the Duke of Guise, but no pension from the King. Hoping to deceive the French into a belief in his sincerity, he became for the time so obviously pro-French that it was believed that he had definitely broken off the friendship with England, although it was suspected that if the new friendship was less profitable to him than the old he would again turn to Elizabeth. (5) This policy meeting with little success, James then planned to bring pressure to bear on France, and if possible extract something from England; care was taken that Bowes should know of the French promises. (6) When this failed, he again swung round to France, which was given to understand that he was already a secret Catholic, "at heart a Papist". (7) He obviously hoped that this would cause France to send the pension, but his fickleness being well known, a public conversion was again insisted on. As this was impossible in the circumstances, James tried to bluster, and bluntly demanded whether France desired to continue the ancient friendship, and threatened to enter into another friendship which was offered "with good conditions". A declaration to France that he was in

(1) Cal. S. Papers, Vol. 5, 31st Octr., 1580

(2) do. Vol. 5, 11th Jan., 1581

(3) Bowes, Correspondence, p. 99, 10th Aug., 1580.

(4) Cal. S. Papers, Span., Vol. 3, 4th Sepr., 1580.

(5) do. do., Vol. 3, 4th Sepr., 1580.

(6) Bowes, Correspondence, p. 164, 11th Jan., 1581.

(7) Cal. S. Papers, Foreign, 162, 5th May, 1581.



favour of granting religious toleration to his Catholic subjects (1) likewise failed, and as he was now in desperate straits, he turned again to England in a much humbler frame of mind. Bowes was told that without the special favour of Elizabeth and her financial assistance he could not carry on the government of Scotland with any success, (2) and as a result England began to consider the policy of buying a permanent controlling interest in Scotland, in order to put a stop to French intrigues there. It was a purely business policy: if the profit to be derived from it were less than the cost, then the alliance, could at any time be broken off. (3) So favourable was the time from the English point of view, and so urgent was the need of the poor James, that Bowes was induced to lend him £500 of his own and promise another £500 for the maintenance of the royal guard. It was apparent that if the guard had to be demobilised for lack of money, then James would have been seized by the pro-French party among the nobles, and the English schemes ruined. (4) The year 1582 closed with James earnestly running the English course.

In 1583 the two rivals for control of James became more earnest because the question of his marriage was coming to the front, and he on his part was not slow to take advantage of the position. Nothing had yet come from Elizabeth, and a request for a loan of £200 from (5) Bowes met with ~~with~~ a refusal, so James turned again to France. Fortunately for his purpose there had come to his court a French ambassador, La Mothe Fenelon, whose place was taken later by de Maineville, to arrange a marriage between James and the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine. In the face of the danger thus presented, Bowes advised that James should be treated generously, but all that Elizabeth would offer was £1,000, which James refused, as not being worth accepting. (6,7,) But as this offer was always something, he did not at once swing round to France; hoping to raise the figure by a proof of his constancy, he treated La Mothe coldly for the benefit of Bowes and Davison. But Elizabeth declined to move, so James changed over to France, because as the English representative had it, they were supplied with "plenty of French crowns". Many of the pro-English party among the nobles were deserting to the other side because of "England's straight

(1) Cal. S. Papers, Foreign, 371, 22nd Octr., 1581.

(2) Bowes Correspondence, p. 206, 12th Octr., 1582.

(3) do. p. 246, 17th Novr., 1582.

(4) do. p. 296, 2nd Decr., 1582.

(5) do. p. 314, 15th Jany., 1583.

(6,7) Cal. S. Papers, Foreign, 5, 4th Jany., 1583.

Hill Burton, Vol. 5, p. 190.





husbandry", and because she paid only in promises. So anxious was Bowes to save the situation that he lent James the £200 asked for before, but since no more was forthcoming, he was utterly ignored at the court, and allowed to see that James could get much more from France than he could offer, and with much less trouble. He prophesied that "the full hand" and the fact that the Scots were always "ready to stoop at the sight of a quick prey showed to them", would work changes in the country's foreign policy. (1) La Mothe now began to work in earnest: he pointed out that as long as England paid for his guard, he was virtually Elizabeth's prisoner, and that as France was willing to assist him there was no need for this humiliation. James, however, was very reluctant to make the change suggested, evidently thinking that England was still a better friend, and instead of committing himself, (2) he tried again to borrow from the unfortunate Bowes, who after some delay obliged, having been practically told that if the money were not given, the guard would be "cassed", and Scotland would need to turn to France. (3, 4) By the end of February, 1583, the French made definite offers of a yearly pension of 100,000 crowns to repair his state and maintain it, another of 12,000 crowns, and a lump sum of 10,000 crowns, asking in return that James should bind himself to follow the King of France's advice in regard to his marriage. (5) This, as he knew, was at once reported to Elizabeth, and she also knew of his speech, "that although he had two eyes, two ears and two hands, he had but one heart, and that was French". (6) But we gather from Bowes' letters that in spite of the fact that James received more disappointment than actual money from Elizabeth, he was still more anxious to preserve the English friendship than to form a French alliance; Bowes, of course may have been deceived in this- it is difficult to tell- James may in fact have successfully blinded him to his real actions, so that Elizabeth might appreciate his fidelity, but at any rate the English representative did believe that de Maineville received very little in the way of a definite promise, and he continued lending money to the needy king. (7)

- (1) Bowes, Correspondence, 20th Jany., 1583.
- (2) do. 22nd Jany., 1583, p. 340.
- (3) do. 31st Jany., 1583.
- (4) Cal. S. Papers, Vol. 6, 12th Feby., 1583.
- (5) Bowes, Correspondence, p. 365, 21st Feby., 1583.
- (6) Letters of Eliz. and James VI, Cam. Soc., h. 6, 23rd Apr., 1583
- (7) Bowes, Correspondence, p. 418, 22nd April, 1583,  
do. p. 442, 18th May, 1583.



#.

While Bowes was thus striving to prevent James from definitely going over to the French, James was awaiting the results of the mission of Colonel Stewart in England. He had been sent on a begging mission to ask for £10,000 sterling in bullion, sufficient money to pay the royal debts, and a pension of £5,000 yearly. (1) While there was any hope of success in that quarter it would have been fatal to jump at the French offers, so he temporised by telling the French representatives that he wished to see a league established which would include the three countries, and hinted that Elizabeth had been his most profitable friend in the past and might still be of great service to him. He had thrown out the hint that France would need to raise her terms. (2) Meanwhile Stewart was attempting to drive the best possible bargain with Lord Hunsdon and Walsingham, referring to the "many fair overtures" received by his master from France, and hinting that if England did not prove generous, then James would be obliged to turn to France. (3) To all this Elizabeth replied that her past goodness was a ~~good enough~~ pledge sufficient of her future kindness, but now she saw that the only form of pledge that would appeal to James was money, the lowest form of pledge possible; Stewart argued that the best proof of friendship was the readiness with which help was given in time of need. (4) The situation was, however, too serious for Elizabeth, and she had to do something for James; she realised that to circumvent the liberal French offers, and so prevent "the wrak and overthrow" of both countries, (5) she would require to open her purse. Accordingly Stewart was sent home with the news that a pension of 10,000 crowns had been decided on, (6) and although bitterly disappointed James pretended to be satisfied-- the French ambassador had left. When however it was known that another offer, this time of (7) 30,000 crowns was likely to be made by France, there was a reaction: the king's interview with Bowes was not quite what had been expected by the Englishman; James told him that although the proposed English sum was so small that his council advised him to refuse it, yet he would accept it "as if it had been a matter of most high value" at the same time declaring that, when he was again in difficulties,

- (1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, No. 417, April, 1583.
- (2) do. Vol. 6, 8th May, 1583.
- (3) do. Vol. 6, 9th May, 1583. No. 459.
- (4) Cal. Sc. Papers, Span., Vol. 3, 4th June, 1583.
- (5) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, No. 462. 14th May, 1583.
- (6) do. Vol. 6, 29th May, 1583.
- (7) do. Vol. 6, 29th June, 1583.



he would have recourse to Elizabeth. (1) Bowes was so impressed that he wrote to say that the king's debts were so great, that he would be doubly grateful if the money were sent quickly, but for long Elizabeth contented herself with promises, a policy to which James speedily raised objections. (2) He accordingly began a secret correspondence with Guise (3) and favoured at his court men known as the leaders of the pro-French party, (4) but not wishing to alienate England entirely until something tangible had come from France, he tried to deceive Elizabeth with hypocritical protestations of his fidelity. He wished, he said in a letter to the English queen, "qu'il yeust une fenestre en ma poitrine par ou vous puissiez aussi voir ma pensee". (5) She was not deceived, however, and declared that if he desired her friendship he must change his policy. (6) This remonstrance had no effect: French papists and members of the French royal guard arrived in Scotland in preparation for the moment when James would make an open declaration of his intentions; a present of fruit arrived, regarded as a symbol that the time was ripe; James allowed his policy to be dictated by Guise. (7) But even yet James was trying to find how much he could draw from Elizabeth by "fair words". (8) There was only one method of putting an end to this, and that was by the speedy payment of the promised English pension, but instead Walsingham was sent to reason with James. Promises were made of an increased pension in return for assurances of better behaviour, but mere words were of no use to him; money was so urgently needed, that James could only turn more eagerly than ever to France. Naturally in English eyes this policy was regarded as the work of "as thankless a prince as ever was born" (Walsingham), but in justice to James we must remember his desperate poverty, and there seems no good reason for doubting that if the English promises had been fulfilled, he would have become a loyal ally of England, at least until he had received better terms elsewhere. He could not afford to remain idle, and determined to send Lord Seton to France

- (1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, 9th July, 1583.
- (2) do. Vol. 6, 13th July, 1583.
- (3) Cal. S. Papers, Span., Vol. 3, 13th July, 1583.
- (4) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, 13th July, 1583.
- (5) Letters of Eliz. and Jas. VI, Cam. Soc., h. 8, 9th July, 1583.
- (6) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, 21st July, 1583.
- (7) do. Vol. 6, 27th July, 1583.
- (8) Bowes, Correspondence, p. 527, 27th July, 1583.



~~France~~ to consolidate the old league; at the same time he apparently began to hope that assistance might come from Spain. (1) He then adopted a more independent attitude with regard to England, so that in September, Bowes was recalled by Elizabeth, who had resolved to let him go his own way, knowing that "once he begins to brave, he is promised succours." (2) Soon, however, repentance came: a message arrived from France with the disappointing news that no financial assistance would be sent until there was a public declaration of his change of faith. England seemed lost, and nothing had come from France. There was nothing for it but to make humble overtures to the older friend, and he sent James Melville to plead that he had seen the error of his ways, and that he intended for the future to act "sa nair as he can to hir plesour". The awkward matter of Seton's embassy was lightly dismissed, as being <sup>more</sup> ~~being~~ for "duty's sake" than for any other purpose, and in any case no objections could be raised to friendship with a country with which so much of Scotland's trade was carried on. (3) But before anything resulted from this transaction, James swiftly turned again, for in December, M. de Mauvissiere arrived to recommence the French intrigues, and the Scottish court began fresh negotiations: the Pope was asked for help, the excuse being his mother's cause, hints were dropped about his probable conversion, but, ~~fearing~~ lest England should hear of this, the Pope was asked to keep it secret, as he said he was at the mercy of his enemies. To Guise he wrote in much the same strain, relating the trouble that had come upon him by following his advice, and pointing out the urgent necessity for sending money, because otherwise he would be forced to throw himself into the hands of his enemies. (4) Cautiously, however, he kept outwardly friendly with England, until later information from France wrought another change. He had asked for "quelque sommes de deniers" to overcome the pro-English faction, and had indicated that it was a king's duty to help a king, and that it was twenty years since France had spent any money on Scotland; he was promised a pension of 20,000 livres tournois, and the services of six hundred guards. (5) ~~But~~ By the summer of 1584,

(1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, 16th Septr., 1583.

(2) Cal. S. Papers, Foreign, 146, 2/12 Octr., 1583.

(3) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 6, <sup>7th Novr., 1583.</sup>

(4) Cal. S. Papers, Span., Vol. 3, 19th Febry., 1584.

(5) Teulet, Papiers, Vol. 2, p. 635, 26th April, 1584.



however, nothing better than promises had come from Europe, money was again begged from Rome in vain, and at last, thoroughly exasperated, James told France that "ne pouvant faire ses affaires en France, il les vouloit faire en Angleterre". "Pour son aage il savoit trop bien dissimuler". (1)

Obviously James had failed. Elizabeth held the whip hand as long as Catholic Europe would do nothing for him until he turned Catholic. But he had shown that he could, when he chose, cause Elizabeth serious inconvenience and alarm, and on this account he felt entitled to more generous treatment from her. Accordingly a blunt demand for 'substance and forces' was made by Sir James Melville, who told Elizabeth that she had no need to fear the king's ambition, because he had given up 'great handling with countries' unless he was compelled ~~to~~ by "sic kynd of doing as has past heirtofore". (2) Hunsdon and Arran were then instructed to carry on the negotiations for an alliance, but these unfortunately did not proceed very quickly, largely because James and Arran were again in receipt of hopeful news from France: money came to relieve the king's debts and to buy the support of the courtiers. (3) In a letter from M. de Fontenay to Mary we learn that the Duke of Guise had sent 6,000 crowns with a promise of more to follow, and that James had declared his willingness to assist the schemes of Spain in an invasion of England, although whether or not he was sincere in his promise was not known. (4) In fact all that can be definitely learned is that James was sincere only in his determination to get the money, and that for that purpose he was ready to promise anything. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why the Master of Gray was at this time engaged in drawing up the terms of the Anglo-Scottish league; and further he had received from the King of Spain a sum of 10,000 crowns, 4,000 of which he distributed among his nobles, in return for the usual promise of a change of faith. (5) Naturally rumours of this duplicity reached the ears of Elizabeth, who, warned that she might as easily "gather figs of thorns, and grapes of thistles" (6) as obtain any reward from the

(1) Teulet, Vol. 2, p. 667, July, 1584.

(2) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 7, 6th June, 1584.

(3) do. Vol. 7, 4th Aug., 1584.

(4) do. Vol. 7, 15th Aug., 1584.

(5) do. Vol. 7, 10th Sept., 1584.

(6) do. Vol. 7, 6th Sept., 1584.



the proposed league, resolved to test him by asking him to reinstate the banished lords, Angus and others, saying that by his conduct in this matters she would judge of his sincerity. (1)

At the beginning of 1585 the whole question of the English alliance was placed on a definite footing; Elizabeth had resolved to buy James, who in his turn was very willing to be bought, provided the price was high enough. "We are content", said the Queen, "rather than he should receive support from any other prince (and so make him trouble us) to bestow on him yearly some reasonable pension". (2) So far, then, James' policy had succeeded: he had by his duplicity forced Elizabeth to admit the necessity of buying control ~~of the policy~~, and meantime, he had been able to extract something from both parties, not much certainly, but enough to be very useful to a ruler always in such desperate straits. But it was obvious that Elizabeth expected straight dealing in the future; as she told him, "who seeketh two stringes to one bowe, may shute strong, but neuer straight". (3)

To accomplish this alliance of England and Scotland against the Catholic powers, was no easy task for Sir Edward Wotton, and it was completed only after long delays; more than once, indeed, it looked as if the negotiations must fail. It was still possible for James to play the old game, because in addition to Elizabeth on the Protestant side, there was Navarre, and on the other side, Spain and the Pope, and also the King of France, all anxious to make a Scottish alliance. (4)

In May the English ambassador arrived at James' court, armed with some very acceptable presents, which at once put him in a very happy frame of mind, so that he wrote Elizabeth to say that he would behave to her "as her natural and well-devoted child". (5) But difficulties at once appeared at the first mention of the financial aspect of the matter: if Wotton mentioned the sum which was his maximum as far as his instructions went, then "the small sound of the sum would rather do harm than good", while on the other hand if he offered a larger sum, then Wotton would be in trouble, and James would be

(1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 7, 3rd Octr., 1584.

(2) do. Vol. 7, 587, April, 1585.

(3) Letters of Eliz. and Jas. VI, Cam. Soc. h. 17, June or July, 1585.

(4) Teulet, Vol. 2, p. 635 et seq.

(5) Letters of Eliz. and Jas. VI, Cam. Soc. h. 15, 27th June, 1585.



~~15~~

disappointed in the end. Walsingham encouraged Wotton by saying that the queen might be induced to raise the pension by £1,000, bringing it up to 20,000 crowns, which he said would carry with it "a reasonable sound".

(1) He was to tell James that the queen had to meet heavy expenses in connection with the Low Countries, to remind him of the kinship between the two rulers, and to endeavour to get James to feel that he should "make more of one hundredth crownes pension at hir majestes hands then of an hundredth thowsand from any other prince". Wotton was well aware of the weakness of such an argument, but he did his best, and James declared his willingness to enter into the league with England, but began to press for an immediate payment of the promised money. (2) Just as the matter looked like being amicably settled, however, there occurred the unfortunate murder of Lord Russell in a Border fray, and while England was demanding satisfaction, the negotiations regarding the pension were, unfortunately for James, suspended. He wept like a child, and for very grief could neither eat, drink or sleep. (3) When Wotton called on him, his swollen eyes were proof of his rage and vexation; he told the Englishman that he feared that he would now be regarded as a dissembler(!) and a man who broke his promises; passionately he protested that he would rather lose all the kingdoms of the world than be false to his word; and he succeeded in making Wotton believe that his chief anxiety was to prove his sincerity in the hope that the negotiations would be re-opened. In reality James was protesting too much-- he was again deep in French intrigues: letters were coming from the Duke of Guise; Jesuits were saying mass in the north without interference, and 10,000 crowns had come from France. Arran, who had been put in prison over the Russell case, was liberated, and there were indications that the Duke of Guise was to be allowed to land with troops in the north, and join James in an invasion of England. (4) So far had James involved himself that in October 1585 the English ambassador was

(1) Hamilton Papers, 473, 2nd May; 1st June, 1585.

(2) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, 8th July, 1585.

(3) do. do. 29th July, 31st July, 1585.

(4) do. do. 15th Sept., 1585



ordered home, but suddenly, next month, the whole aspect of things was changed, when the exiled lords returned, secured possession of the king and forced Arran to flee. The English negotiations were resumed, James protesting that he had never broken any promise to England, although strong attempts had been made to force him into a foreign alliance. How far James had been a free agent in these French intrigues, and how far he had been merely a tool in the hands of the powerful pro-French party amongst his nobles, it is difficult to ascertain from the records, but, knowing James' love for double-dealing, we suspect that James had at least been a willing party to them. This time, however, things did look more or less settled, because the Scottish Estates passed an act authorising the king to join the league with England. Sir Thomas Randolph, now the representative of England, did not even yet feel very sanguine, because the other side had not given up hope; Henry III of France was alarmed at the sudden revolution, and sent first D'Esneval and then Courcelles to prevent the formation of the league; (1) and the King of Spain, joining for the time with France for the same important purpose, sent money to Scotland through his ambassador in England, Mendoza. (2) All that England was offering was "fair words". (3) Thus it was that James, although very anxious to see the league with England concluded, and to enjoy the first instalment of his pension, could still play off the one against the other in an attempt to raise the value of his friendship in the eyes of the monarchs of Europe and particularly of Elizabeth, whose friendship meant most to him. Accordingly the Master of Gray assured Randolph that his king would be compelled to accept the golden offers of foreign princes unless Elizabeth helped him speedily, (4) and James himself told him that his debts were so great that he required immediate relief, and reminded him of the fact that the pension had been long promised. Randolph was being continually asked when the money was to come, (5) and in the hope of speeding things up, and impressing Elizabeth with his fidelity, James snubbed the French ambassador, saying that he was a king equal in dignity, if not in greatness, with the King

(1) Teulet, Vol. 2, p. 72.

(2) Cal. S. Papers, For., 5th Feby., 1586.

(3) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, 6th Feby., 1586.

(4) Papers relating to the Master of Gray, p. 69.

(5) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, 14th Mar., 1586.



of France, and that he refused to listen to him. (1) As Randolph reminded Walsingham, it was all a matter of money, and prayed him, in the words of Terence, "pecuniam in loco negligere interdum maximum est lucrum", and "bis dat qui cito dat". (2) At last Elizabeth began to move: it was resolved to bestow upon James a pension of £4,000 a year, which was £1,000 less than had originally been decided on, and Randolph was to offer as an excuse the fact that she had other heavy charges to meet. (3) Ignorant of this resolution James was pressing for the grant of a lump sum, and informing Randolph of the large offers that were being made now by France. (4) It then struck him that there was no mention of the pension in the articles of the league, and knowing that Elizabeth's word was not too reliable, or perhaps feeling that his own future actions might possibly serve as an excuse for stopping the pension, he asked her to sign a bond binding herself "in the words of a queen to yield to him all the days of his life a yearly rent of --- crowns". (5) She, of course, pretended surprise, made out that this proposal was not James' own, and requested him to "teache your rawe counselars bettar manner,.... for this neuer came out of your shoppe". (6) Finally she regretted that her own difficulties prevented her from dealing as generously with him as she would have liked, but she was resolved "for the present" to give him 20,000 crowns, and she added that should her position improve, then the sum might be increased. (7) Elizabeth spoke of the pension as "a testimony of the love she bore him", but James bluntly said in his proposed form of bond that the money was "to satisfy her expectation of him"; Elizabeth delicately refused to admit she was buying control of his policy, but James did not blush to acknowledge that he was selling himself. On the 12th May the money arrived--£4,000. James was furious. He had thrown away all chance of help from other princes in return for a sum disappointingly small, but finally, after sulking for three days, he accepted the money on the understanding that Elizabeth should at once be asked for more. (8) Not only the king, but the nobles of Scotland

(1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, 17th Mar., 1586.

(2) Papers relating to the Master of Gray, p. 69.

(3) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, ~~19th~~ Mar., 1586.

(4) do. do., 2nd April, 1586.

(5) do. do., 327 April, 1586.

(6) Letters of Eliz. and Jas. VI., Cam. Soc., h. 30, Mar. 1586.

(7) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, 326, ~~April~~, 1586,

(8) do. do., 13th May, 1586.



also expressed disgust at the amount; as they saw it, the king had sold his country for such a small sum that they themselves could expect very little from it. The merchants regarded with dismay an alliance which would endanger their valuable trading privileges with France, and they felt that they could not obtain similar advantages from England. In fact there was a general demand that the pension should be increased, or that the king's succession to the English throne be admitted, (1) but although unsatisfactory to Scotland, the alliance had been made, and the two countries were now united in a treaty, offensive and defensive, to protest the Protestant faith, against the schemes of Catholic Europe.

James thought for a time to use the presence of the French ambassador in Edinburgh as a means of forcing Elizabeth to increase the pension, but that policy was not, at the time, possible, for he was informed that the money would only be paid as long as he remained faithful. (2) Again, as in the days of the regency, Scotland lost her independence; James was spoken of by the English as "Jaquet, the English pensioner", and Scotland had purchased for herself "perpetuall shayme and ignominie". (3)

## II. From the Execution of Mary till 1603.

James "continued to take money from hands dipped in his mother's blood". (Andrew Lang, Vol. 2, p. 335)

It is in connection with his treatment of Queen Mary, especially at the time of the execution, that we see the results of James' poverty most clearly; his dependance upon Elizabeth made him adopt a policy of inaction for which he has been bitterly condemned. Briefly the position is this: he knew of his mother's danger, and he failed to take any effective measures to save her. Is there nothing to be said in his defence?

There can be no doubt that James could not plead ignorance of his mother's danger: in October, 1586 he was stated to be anxious to save her life, (4) and sent Keith

(1) Cal. Sc. Papers, Vol. 8, 18th May, 1586.

(2) do. do., 2nd June, 1586.

(3) An. Hist. Jas. VI. p. 237.

(4) Ca. Sc. Papers, Vol. 9. 11th Oct., 1586.

on a mission to the English court with the double purpose of preserving Mary's life, or making arrangements for Elizabeth using Mary "as she thought expedient", and obtaining a declaration that his succession to the English throne would not be prejudiced by Mary's action. (1) The sincerity of James' attitude is more than doubtful. If he had really been anxious to save his mother, Keith would have been sent with one set of instructions only, to demand guarantees for her safety, and to threaten reprisals if any danger befell her. But his anxiety to please his wealthy ally tempted him to afford Elizabeth an excuse for Mary's execution; she on her part must have felt reasonably certain that she had little to fear from James beyond hypocritical blustering. Again, if James had been in earnest he would have sent an ambassador of some standing; Keith was a man of no rank, and was in fact well known as a paid servant of the English queen, having received at least 25,000 crowns from her during the four years before his mission. (2) Nor was there any need to send him at all; often in the past, and often too after this, it had been found necessary to send a gentleman in preference to a nobleman on embassies to foreign countries, for as was said about an ambassador to France in 1597, he must not be a man of high rank, as that would mean "great chargis quhilk is not meit". (3) But at

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, Octr., 21st, 1586.

(2) do. do. 30th Novr., 1586.

(3) Hist. MSS., Moray, p. 639.



this time several of the Scottish nobles offered to go at their own expense. Had noblemen been chosen, Elizabeth would have realised that the very people who had the power in Scotland, were against Mary's death, and she might have been afraid of taking the extreme step. In fact everything in connection with this mission inclines one to agree with the French ambassador in Scotland, Courcelles, that there was a secret understanding between James and Elizabeth. (1) The nature of that understanding is not difficult to discover, when we remember how absolutely essential to James was the English subsidy, and the proof of the truth of this lies in what happened afterwards. Keith was given satisfaction on the question of James' claim not suffering on account of his mothers actions, but on the vital question no assurance was forthcoming. A less cunning man than James would then have recalled Keith and done no more, but he was too astute a politician to fall into that mistake; he made a great show of filial affection and anxiety, and ordered him to cease negotiations for Mary's life, for as he told him, "ye have done it to lang", and threatened to break off the English alliance if his mother was put to death. (2) He could now make a parade of firmness, and after the execution could tell the world that he had done his best. The threat was, of course an empty one; Douglas told Walsingham that it

(1) Courcelles, Despatches, p. 19.

(2) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 120, Octr., 1586.

would be a wise thing to send James a few presents so that "one pleasure might help put out another grief", (1) and the Master of Gray wrote to Douglas that if Elizabeth only excused herself and gave 'some proof' of her feelings, then James would "love her and honour her before all other princes". (2) All this is bad enough: James was willing to be bought over to acquiescence in his mother's death, but unfortunately for James' reputation a graver charge can be levelled against him. He was seemingly guilty of using his mother's danger as a means of extorting more money from Elizabeth. He himself condemned Mary, (3) but when ~~when~~ the people of Edinburgh cried out against his cowardice in the streets, he was afraid to go out of doors, and made another show of manliness. He (4) instructed Douglas to make Elizabeth stay her hand until another embassy arrived from Scotland. (5) This exhibition of national excitement could be used as an argument for forcing Elizabeth to raise her terms. When the dreaded news arrived the nation was deeply moved, but James went about his pleasure as usual. He is said never to have moved his countenance, nor left off hunting, (6) and Calderwood says "he could not conceal his inward joy at being sole king". (7)

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 20th Novr., 1586.

(2) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 3, p. 230.

(3) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 27th Novr., 1586.

(4) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 3, p. 234.

(5) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, No. 165, Novr., 1586.

(6) do. do. 2nd Mar., 1587.

(7) Vol. 4, p. 611.



Elizabeth had known all along that she would experience little danger from James, that her pension would prevent rash action on his part, while he realised that if he adopted a cautious policy he could turn the execution to his pecuniary advantage. Thus a letter from her protesting her innocence, together with an offer of an increased money bribe, made him once more her friend, if he had ever been anything else. (1) She asked him to name his own terms, and promised she would satisfy him. (2) Her lying declaration of her innocence, and her deceitful and tyrannical treatment of her secretary, was accepted by James, and used as a justification of his policy when attacked by his subjects.

James, then, in reality did nothing to save Mary, and for that he stands condemned; his inaction was due to his desire to maintain the profitable friendship with his mother's executioner. In his own defence he argued that he could not avenge the 'heinous murder' because of his tender youth and his lack of money, or in his own words, his "excessive cowpit from hand to hand, from neydie to neydie, to gredie and gredie, having sufficient patrimonie and casualitie, and yet hes none at all in store". (3) Is it true that his poverty prevented him from undertaking a war of revenge? We find from the Records of the Privy Council that in December, 1586, it was resolved to appoint a committee representing the

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 7th April, 1587.

(2) Courcelles, Despatches, p. 51.

(3) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, No. 567, 1588.

three Estates to find how the sum necessary for a war could best be raised; the nobles offered a generous contribution, every earl £300, every baron £200, and the prelates sums from £40 downwards, while the freeholders and feuars of Lothian (1) freely offered 10,000 merks. Never had Scotland been so generous to grant taxation, but James did not avail himself of their offer. <sup>yet</sup> But, in fairness to James, we must admit that even this was insufficient for the purpose; Scotland could never raise a force large enough, nor keep it in the field long enough to conquer the very much stronger country. (2) The utmost that he could have done was to have led a raid across the Borders, which might have proved disastrous; as the majority of Englishmen approved of Mary's death, he could have looked for no support from them.

Neither France or Spain <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ eager to help James, although they would have been glad to see him undertake a war. As these two countries saw it, a successful campaign would mean the union of Scotland and England under a Protestant king, and yet James did try to enlist foreign sympathy. Philip II, when appealed to, offered money, but stipulated that it should only be paid when war had been declared, showing not only that he distrusted James, rightly, but that the invasion was to be in the interests of Spain. (3) Elizabeth, too, had sent a large sum of money to Scotland, and her party promised to prevent

(1) Reg. P. C., Vol. <sup>4, 20th Decr, 1586.</sup> ~~11 Jan., 1587.~~ h. 129.  
 (2) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 331, Mar., 1587.  
 (3) Cal. S. P., Spanish, Vol. 4, 2nd Octr., 1587.



the king from carrying out the wishes of Philip. (1)

This much, then, must be said in James' defence, that his own and his country's poverty, and his lack of control over his nobles, prevented him from a war of revenge, a war of conquest. Certainly a raid would have satisfied the requirements of honour, but it might have resulted in his own and his country's ruin. But when all is said in his favour, these were not the arguments that prevailed with James; what governed his policy was the present need of the English subsidy, and the chance of succeeding to the English throne. Another thought arises: James has been condemned for continuing to accept money from Elizabeth; but James cannot be judged by the ordinary moral code in this respect. He was not a private person, but a king, and if he had refused her financial aid his rule in Scotland would have completely broken down, with disastrous results for the people as a whole.

The worst feature of the whole matter, however, is that he was quick to use Mary's misfortunes to the best advantage, to use them as the basis for appeals to foreign rulers for money. To the King of France he wrote expressing his determination to wage a war of revenge, but his poverty constrained him to wait with patience until God and his good friends provided him with the means. Fearing that his duplicity might

(1) Cal. S. P., Spanish, Vol. 4, p. xii, xiv.

be detected he asked him not to believe any stories he might hear about his insincerity. (1) The Bishop of Glasgow was instructed to find out the exact sum that could be expected, while Courcelles was informed that, unless the money was forthcoming, England would undoubtedly regain control over him. (2) Writing to the Duke of Guise, he complained that troubles had arisen with his subjects, because at his advice he had undertaken the cause of "his much revered and dear mother", and had abandoned the English faction, and now unless some help is forthcoming, he must abandon her cause. (3) He also approached the Pope, professing that in return for monetary assistance he would begin a struggle for Mary and in addition "satisfy him on all other points". (4) Obviously he was hinting again at conversion and at war with England, both of which he never meant to perform. Unfortunately for the success of this scheme, James' character was too well known, and Europe realised that the money would be spent in the old way.

On Mary's death there arose the question of what was to be done with her property in France, and James could not let the opportunity slip. He determined to send ambassadors to collect all sums due to her, to sell the house at Fontainebleau, and get Henry of France to refund the sums that he had spent

(1) Courcelles, Despatches, p. 44. (2) p. 57.

(3) Cal. S. P., Spanish, Vol. 3, 19th Feby., 1587.

(4) do. do.



out of Mary's property. As a further inducement it was pointed out that James had called his son Henry, making choice of that name above all others. This embassy, however, was only decided upon in 1597, and it is difficult to understand why he waited ten years. (1)

The foreign policy of James VI at this time, whether right or wrong, was not quite unsuccessful: he had succeeded in making Elizabeth nervous, and that, plus the warlike preparations of the Catholic Earls in the north of Scotland, forced her to undertake her old policy of offering the highest price. Scotland was <sup>a</sup> again up for auction. Accordingly, in June, 1587 she despatched to him a present of £2,000. (2) This sum was sufficient to make him pro-English for a time, but, as Bowes pointed out, it could not last long, and was not large enough to buy him permanently. He argued that a pension of at least £5,000 a year was required before James could be depended on. (3) The old policy was working so satisfactorily that, when <sup>Ashely</sup> ~~Ashbey~~ was sent to Scotland to negotiate concerning the ratification of the league, James was most profuse in his protestations of devoted loyalty, thanking Elizabeth for her motherly care of him, promising to act in future like her natural son, and pleading that arrangements be made quickly about the increased financial assistance. He protested that he was not anxious to receive

(1) Hist. MSS., Moray, p. 639.

(2) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 22nd June, 1587. (3) 9th July, 1587.

payment before he had earned it; he was only asking for the money so that he could embrace her cause with "honour"!

(1) The Negotiations with Spain had never been broken off, because on the one hand James had not given up hope of getting something from that country, and on the other, Philip was bound to maintain friendly relations with Scotland in view of his projected invasion. ~~these~~. These considerations forced Elizabeth to make generous offers, and she promised through Asheby a Dukedom in England with a reasonable income added to it, a yearly pension of £5,000, and a sum sufficient to maintain the guards. (2) These glowing promises were good enough to ensure James' fidelity during the crisis of the Armada, but, the danger over, she played James' own game, and feeling that there was no further need for generosity, she made out that Asheby had exceeded<sup>d</sup><sub>^</sub> his instructions, and that she never gave him authority to promise such a reward. James fully realised that he had been outwitted, and the consciousness that his own duplicity had brought it on himself did not prevent him from feeli<sup>n</sup>g<sub>^</sub> very bitter. As the Master of Gray said, "The king, our master, has of all the golden mountains offered, received a fiddler's wage". (3) "The Queen's pensioner" had been treated "like a boy". (4) But he was careful to avoid making the mistake of allowing his disappointment to cause a complete rupture, because in that case Elizabeth would have

Vol. 9,  
(1) Cal. Sc. P., 1st Aug., 1588. (2) 3rd Aug., 1588.  
(3) do. Vol. 9, 14th Decr., 1588. (4) 29th Decr., 1588.



given him nothing at all, and putting the best face on it, he pointed out that on the strength of her promises he had already engaged a force of 300 men, and he must have £3,000 to meet their wages. This amount was duly paid, but was spent the same month as it was received, September, 1588; the episode was closed and James was once more forced to hawk his wares round the courts of Europe.

He approached Elizabeth's foes, beginning with the Duke of Parma, (1) and the King of Spain. The latter began again to make profuse offers, in return for Scottish assistance in a second attempt against England, for he had not given up hope in spite of the calamitous defeat of the Armada. But nothing tangible came of these fresh negotiations; either James was pessimistic about receiving money -- certainly he had seldom received more than promises in the past; or he realised that Philip was well aware of his untrustworthy character; or it may be, he only entered into them to please certain of his nobles who had expressed dissatisfaction over the result of the English negotiations. At any rate he was only half-hearted in the matter; he seems to have made up his mind to ask Philip for as much as possible with a forlorn hope of perhaps receiving a little, and for that little he was not prepared to risk his future. The policy he followed in the year of the Armada had done little to enhance his reputation for statesmanship, or fill his treasury.

(1) Cal. Sc. P., Vol. 9, 10th Decr., 1588.

The year 1589 saw a complete revolution in the conditions of European politics as far as James was concerned. We have seen that the peculiar strength of his position had been that he could play England and France off against each other because of the national enmity existing between them, and but for Elizabeth's cleverness in helping to maintain the Huguenot cause in France, and so preventing the King of France from becoming too dangerous to her, James would have been in the position of perfect master of the situation. But now Elizabeth reaped the reward of her French policy; Henry of Navarre was now legal King of France, and being so deeply in her debt for her past services to his cause, he continued the English alliance, and indeed until he succeeded in accomplishing his recognition by the whole of France, her help was still necessary. Thus the enmity between France and England was ended, and James suffered; it was no longer possible for him to appeal to the one against the other, and thus the foreign policy followed since the first regent was finished with. But it was still possible for him to play on the Franco-Spanish enmity, the reasons for which were still in operation, and in addition Henry had formed plans for the rectification of his frontiers at the expense of Spain, although he died before he could do much in that direction. In addition Philip and the Pope were still interested in the possibility of James' conversion to Roman Catholicism, a card which he kept up his sleeve until the end of the period; and events in Scotland made it possible to make a great deal of



this issue. As James surveyed the situation, he still saw some hope of profit, and he resolved to do his best.

He began by spreading rumours to the effect that he was about to make the religious change, and then waited to see if the Catholic powers would <sup>loose</sup> ~~open~~ their purse strings. But soon events took place which placed him in a very awkward position. In February, 1589, Elizabeth made the discovery that the Earls of Huntly and Errol had been in correspondence with Philip and Parma, promising assistance should there be a second attempt at an invasion, and, sending the letters which had revealed the conspiracy to James, she demanded punishment. The Presbyterians in alarm made similar representations. Now, if James disobeyed these demands, he would have to face serious civil strife, and would at the same time alienate Elizabeth completely, and he could afford to do neither. On the other hand if he did punish the two Earls then he lost all hope of help from Philip and the Pope. It was just as well that James never seriously intended to turn Catholic, because he was able to formulate a policy now unhampered by any religious scruples. James would have admitted that such a change of faith would have ruined his chances of securing the English throne, which was his chief ambition, and he only intended to give a measure of toleration to the Catholics. For this he hoped to be well rewarded by the Pope and Philip, and at the same time he expected it would force Elizabeth to be more generous. In the events that followed he proved himself,

if not a great statesman, certainly a most cunning one.

His main idea was to deceive both sides and serve two paymasters; naturally he could not carry on a policy of *double* deception for very long, yet he hoped to do so long enough to obtain money from both. To please England and his clergy he had Errol and Huntly examined, and the latter was placed in Edinburgh Castle as a prisoner. Soon he escaped, and the two headed a rising, but after the so called battle of the Bridge of Dee, they gave in, were again imprisoned, but before the end of 1589 were released. (1) To Elizabeth he could make out that he had done his best, and his weakness prevented him from taking extreme measures against the earls, while to Spain he could say that he had obviously been very lenient. In 1593 occurred that mysterious episode the "Spanish Blanks", to which the events of 1589 had been a kind of introduction. Shortly, the Earls of Huntly, Errol and Angus had been discovered conspiring to give assistance to a scheme of invasion from Spain. Again James was called upon to punish the offenders, and again he was in difficulties; in fact his position was worse than before because he himself was implicated. (2) In June, 1592 he had instructed John Ogilvie of Pourie to advise Philip against proceeding further in the business that year, and the financial side of his policy is clearly shown in the letter he wrote at the time. This letter was to have

(1) Hume Brown, Vol. 2, p. 208-209.

(2) C. S. P. Spanish, Vol. 4, p. 603.



been sent to Philip by Ogilvie, but as its endorsement shows, it was "concredit" to Mr. George Ker, and withdrawn when he was taken "for the safety of James' honour". (1) In it he advised that Spain should not 'mell' any further in the enterprise except by sending money, a clear proof that James was involved in the matter only for the sake of the money he hoped to make out of it. All this time he was making representations to Elizabeth that she must send him 'hard coin and brave men' to enable him to battle against the common foe! (2) But he was careful to represent to the Catholic side that was acting as one favourable to Catholicism: he took no steps to bring the Earls to trial. The first fruits of this policy of cunning and double dealing was that the Pope despatched the welcome present of 40,000 ducats, and also promised a pension of 10,000 ducats a month, in return for an undertaking to protect Scottish Catholics. (3) Unfortunately for James this money fell into the hands of the people of Aberdeen, who lost it in turn to the Catholic Earls (4), and we can imagine the bitter anguish of the king after all his pains. His success with Elizabeth was less striking. Repeated demands for money met with curt refusals; he was told that there was no need to beg for money, because, by law, his own subjects were bound to serve him at their own charges in far greater measure than was required to <sup>h</sup>castise <sub>A</sub> three or four rebels, and in any case he

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 4, pp. 214-216.

(2) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 191.

(3) Martin Hume, Treason and Plot, p. 26.

(4) Cal. S. P., Spanish, Vol. 4, p. 590.

had shown that he was not in earnest. Here she was right (1) because he was delaying action in the hope that some money might be forthcoming from Spain. When that hope failed him, he was forced to take open steps to crush the Catholics, and in October 1594 he defeated them at Glenlivet. Even after the battle he had hopes of making profit; Spain was lost for the time, but he represented to Elizabeth that he must still maintain an army against a possible revival of the trouble, and appealed to her for assistance. He trusted that his part "was now past 'fieri'" and he prayed her to let her assistance "appear now 'in esse'". (2) But he was trying further afield. It struck him that if he paraded a desire to crush Catholicism in Scotland, he might with reason make an appeal to Holland for assistance, since that country had not yet completed its struggle against Spain. Accordingly he despatched Colonel Stewart on an embassy to the States General of the Low Countries requesting financial aid, enough to pay for an army of 1,000 foot and 500 horse, £8,000 sterling. Stewart spread pitiful stories about his master's abject poverty, and pointed out that unless some help was sent him, the Catholics would gain control over his policy; Scotland would then become a province of Spain, which, enormously strengthened thereby, would be enabled to crush the Low Countries. The chief men there were impressed, and being able to raise the money, were preparing to do so, but again James' clever scheming came to nothing,

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 4, pp. 520, 523, 530.

(2) do. do. Part 5, p. 270-1.



this time because of the action of England. The English representative, ~~Robert Dudley~~, pointed out to the Dutch that James was endeavouring to trick them, that the money would not be spent on an army, but would be converted to his private uses, or distributed among the courtiers, some of whom needed it, and others, like the Chancellor had lent it. The Dutch were allowed to understand, too, that if they did give him the money, Elizabeth would be seriously offended: she had given him so much that it would be a reflection on her generosity, which was so well known. Evidently she regarded James as her own and would not share him with another. In any case the Dutch owed her too much to offend her, and the mission failed. "because of the command of England". (1) Elizabeth taxed James with "these complaints and moans made to foreign estates". (2)

Nothing remained now but to try the Spanish market. The Earls had been punished, but James was not long in finding a new excuse for reopening negotiations. He tried to induce Philip to believe that he was very anxious to get rid of "the intolerable yoke of England" at whose instigation he had proceeded against the Catholic Earls, and was now willing to join in an alliance against England in conjunction with Spain in order to avenge his mother's death. He was careful to point

(1) Hist. MSS., Moray, p. 668.

(2) do. Salisbury, Part 5, pp. 102, 109, 114, 142, 145, 143. 531.

out, however, that Philip was to send money only, and with this he would employ men to advance into England and make war on his own "heretics". A Spanish army was the last thing he wanted to see on Scottish soil, because he was well aware that a Spanish conquest of England would not be engaged in for his benefit. In any case he could not hide Spanish troops from Elizabeth's spies, but Spanish gold he could,--it would not last so very long. In return for a definite promise of money, James stated that he was prepared to send an assurance signed or sealed "on any conditions". Further, according to him, he was resisting all attempts on the part of Holland, England "and other united heretics" to join against the King of Spain. (1) But try as he could, nothing would induce Philip to send him anything; even James' offer of a signed assurance would not draw the wily Spaniard.

All this time he had been striving to retain England's friendship, in other words carrying on a campaign against Elizabeth's purse. He repeatedly protested his innocence of these intrigues, and asked for help according to the proverb "qui cito dat, bis dat", (2) and expressing the hope that when "it pleased God to lighten her charges" she would increase her bounty. (3) But Elizabeth knew too much, and punished him by postponing the sending of the annuity, causing James to protest that it was no longer "ane honourable annuity" but a "voluntary

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 5, p. 74.

(2) do. do. Part 4, p. 545.

(3) do. do. Part 4, p. 375.



'uncertainty", and that he "was not one who was born to be a beggar", but to be beggit at". (1) The "Catholic Earls" episode closes with James ruefully counting up his gains. He had mixed himself up in a maze of intrigue, and what was the result? From Elizabeth he had received enough for 'horse meat' (2) and a list of the moneys she had paid him since 1586, (3) showing that he had received £6,500 over and above his allowance. Of course there were the 40,000 ducats which he ought to have had, and how he must have missed them!

The year 1595 was one of the worst James experienced in all his reign, financially speaking; he was drowned in debt, and was only saved by the work of the Octavians in the next year. A successful foreign policy, successful that is from the cash point of view, was imperative, and so we find him busy again with intrigues, which as worked out in detail by Martin Hume in his "Treason and Plot", are so bewilderingly mysterious that they leave the reader with but two clear impressions; first, that James had an <sup>a</sup>amazing gift for this kind of diplomacy, and second that he was never for a moment sincere in his flirtations with the continental powers. The aim in front of him seems to have been money, money all the time. There is very little that is new in his policy at this time; Elizabeth had proved niggardly, well then, he must force her to adopt a more generous attitude, and that was only possible by making approaches to the other

- (1) Letters of Eliz. & Jas. p. 68.
- (2) do. do. p. 110.
- (3) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 226.

side <sup>with</sup> ~~making~~ the usual offers in the usual spirit. He gave instructions to Lord Wemyss and the Bishop of Glasgow to open negotiations for the renewal of the old alliance with France, and to ask among other things for a pension for his son, but Henry IV feared that such an alliance would estrange Elizabeth and he refused either to renew it or to send the money. Negotiations with Rome and Spain were still being carried on at the same time, but the only result was that Elizabeth became thoroughly alarmed, and sent Bowes north at the beginning of 1596. (1) Being herself hard pressed for money, chiefly owing to the subsidies she was sending to Henry IV to help to maintain him on his throne, she told Bowes that he was not to offer James any money but was to do what he could otherwise to keep him faithful. In total ignorance of this James received him in a kindly manner, but allowed him to understand that since golden offers were coming in to entice him into joining with Spain, he could not long continue to be Elizabeth's ally unless she gave him some help. He declared that he was anxious to continue the English alliance, which was quite true, for nothing very tangible had reached him from Europe, and so, making a virtue of a necessity, he awaited results. Unfortunately there then occurred the Kinmont Willie episode, which seriously offended Elizabeth, and gave her an excuse for threatening to stop the pension unless Buccleuch were handed over to her. Although his subjects applauded the

(1) Tytler Vol. 4, p. 239.



deed, James dreaded to lose what was so absolutely essential to him, and he surrendered ~~to~~ <sup>the</sup> offender. But he made some show of spirit, and remonstrated that Elizabeth's threat was a more serious breach of the league than his protection of Buccleuch. (1)

So far, then, the sole result of all his intrigues had been the conservation of his English annuity, but as this was inadequate he was forced to appeal once more to Rome. Pourie presented petitions to the Pope asking 2,000 gold crowns a month to assist him to put down his rebellious subjects, and 4,000 a month after he had proclaimed his conversion to the old faith. (1) Lang regards the documents presented by Pourie as "impudent impostures", and so they are in the sense that James never intended to fulfil his promises, but there is no reason for holding that James had never made them or would not accept the money. Father Gordon, the Jesuit, was also employed in James' interest and returned with some money, but with unscrupulous cleverness, James sent the information of the Catholic intrigues thus obtained to Elizabeth, who rewarded him with a very welcome present of 5,000 angels. (2) This money was soon spent, and he was forced to continue the intrigues. It was now, 1597, that he succeeded in getting a tax of 200,000 merks voted for his foreign policy, and while the main idea was to enlist the sympathy of foreign courts for his succession

(1) Lang, Vol. 2, p.409.

(2) Winwood, Documents. Vol. 1, p.13

to the English throne, it seems that he hoped to add to his revenue at the same time. The earnestness with which James entered into these negotiations is proved by a letter he wrote to Lord Newbottle, the Collector, when ordering him to pay 5,000 merks to Mr. Alexander Dickson the ambassador to (1) Flanders. "I assure you," he said, "this turne concernis my service weichtier nor many can imagine, and thairfor I man have you to do herein even mair nor ye may". His debts to the Comptroller were so heavy that he was demanding repayment out of the tax and urging his claim before that of the ambassadors, because James added, "sen I have be the Comptrollaires awin consent tane all excuise of the ambassador's hinder from you, lett not my earande be any langaire frustrate with delayes. I think my awin money sould be serue my awin turnis without our mony doubled requistis". But with all the preparations there was little success gained in return for ~~the~~ the money spent; merely "chains and offers of friendship". (2) From Rome came nothing but vague offers of "Grand deniers". (3) Henry IV, in answer to an appeal, refused to join him in a league against England, but was willing to enter into an alliance based on friendship with England, which, of course was of no use to James whose chief aim was to get the two countries to bid against each other. When Elizabeth heard of it she was so annoyed that Henry IV informed James that he could not consider the

(1) Royal Letters, Taxation, 1597-1632.

(2) p. 31.

(3) Teulet, Vol. 3, p. 610.



matter at all. (1) His Spanish intrigues were hampered by the fact that while he was pressing for Spanish gold, he was making it clear that he would not admit Spanish troops, (2) and he was also doubtful whether he should "cherish a bird in the hand or two in the wood, to accept the present Spanish gold or to temporise for after times". (3) He had failed completely to extort any money from Europe, and the breach with England was steadily growing wider, because the English spy system was able to ferret out all that was going on. These intrigues are so much at variance with the tone of the letters which James was sending to Elizabeth at this time, and if carried to completion would have been so fatal to his chances, that some writers have held that the Scots agents abroad were plotting on their own account and using James' name as a cloak to hide their own selfish purposes, and so it has been concluded that it is impossible to ascertain how far he was really guilty of these intrigues. (4) But the difficulty seems to disappear once it is grasped that James' sole motive was the raising of money, and that he never intended to alienate England. From this point of view his letters are not so hypocritical as they seem on the surface.

For example, he told Elizabeth that he wished that all the direct or indirect dealing that ever he had that might concern her person or state were in a book laid open before her, so

(1) Teulet, Vol. 3, p. 597.

(2) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 8, p. 147. (3) p. 145.

(4) Lang, Vol. 2, p. 437.

that she could see how far he was from guilt against her since his birth. (1) Certain it is that these intrigues, so amazingly intricate, would have been unnecessary had England been more generous in her treatment of the poverty-stricken James. Elizabeth's difficulties with Scotland were largely of her own making, and it may have been her appreciation of this fact that led her to send him £3,000 at the end of 1598. (2) But this was not sufficient, and so the intrigues went on.

The Master of Gray in 1599 reported the continuance of negotiations with Rome to Elizabeth. (3) The Catholic Patrick Stewart, a brother of the Earl of Athol, petitioned the Pope for money, on the pretence that James was making preparations for a war against England which would commence immediately the money arrived, and an offer was made of 100,000 crowns down and a further 2,000,000 the moment toleration was given and war declared on England. (4) James had not dealt so long with Elizabeth without learning something of her unscrupulous methods, and when information leaked out, he stated the letters were forgeries, imprisoned his Secretary, Elphinstone, and then pardoned him. (5) But the two countries became further estranged, and, when James directed appeals to Elizabeth, she replied with a list of "Her Majesty's gratuities to the King of Scots" to show that between 1592 and 1599 she had sent him £26,000, (6) and in 1600 James could complain that his annuity had not been

(1) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 8, p. 287. (2) Lang, 2, 438.  
 (3) Papers, M. of Gray, p. 187. (4) Tytler, 4, 279.  
 (5) Cal. S. P., Span., Vol. 4, p. 689.



paid. (1) In the beginning of 1601 the Earl of Mar and the Abbot of Kinloss were sent to her to ask for money, and in refusing she said that it would be better for him to cease these intrigues with Catholic Europe. Cecil, however, sent him £10,000 out of his own pocket. (2) In 1601 overtures were again made to Rome, with the time-worn offer of a conversion, (3) and this brought in "some crowns". (4)

By 1602, however, we are nearing the end of the sordid story; for two reasons James meddled less with these plots. First Elizabeth was obviously not going to last long, and second he must have realised, certainly he was advised, (5) that in his own interests he had better stop them, or else the English throne might slip from him. ~~But~~ However his need for money did tempt him to intrigue with the Pope as late as March, 1603, that is a month before Elizabeth died; he is reported as having received from Rome "strange offers", and was considering them. (7) Also since it was practically certain that he would become King of England, the powers of Europe were prepared to be friendly whether he remained Protestant or not, and they began to bid against each other for his alliance. Philip III actually offered his daughter in marriage to his son with the additional bribe of as much money as he required. (8) To counteract this a French offer was about to be made,

(1) Lang, Vol. 2, p. 444. (2) Tytler, Vol. 4, p. 302-304.  
 (3) Cal. S. P., Span., Vol. 4, 705. (4) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 12, p. 49. (5) Same, p. 12. (7) Same, p. 665.  
 (8) Teulet, Vol. 3, p. ~~733~~. 726.

while the Archduke of Austria was also among the well-wishers. Quick to take advantage of the new situation, James at once proposed to Maupas that the King of France should oblige him with a loan. (1) The union of the crowns, of course, stopped this little scheme, but we cannot help thinking that if he had not succeeded to the English throne when he did, James would have continued to make France and Spain bid against each other, although it is improbable that he would have obtained very much, both countries being fully occupied with domestic difficulties.

For the sake of clearness we have left over the consideration of James' intrigues with the smaller powers of Italy until the end. Since 1595 he had been negotiating with the republic of Venice, and in the spring of 1596 Sir William Keith was sent there to request support for his claims to the English throne. In November James urged Venice to join him in a league against the common enemy, Spain, but he also asked for a loan, and hinted that favours granted now would be paid back in commercial concessions. It is not known, however, whether anything came of these practices or not. (2)

He had been busy also with Florence: the Grand Duke Ferdinand had the reputation of being one of the wealthiest rulers of the time, and the Archduchess Christina was James' cousin. Relying upon this relationship and the fact that Ferdinand, as Keith reported in 1596, was the King of Spain's "onfriend

(1) Teulet, Vol. 3, p. 733.

(2) Mackie, Sc. Hist. Review, Vol. 21, p. 277.



quaytlie", he resolved to attempt to get financial aid.

Negotiations were somewhat protracted, but the two rulers became sufficiently friendly for James to propose a marriage between his son Henry and one of Ferdinand's daughters.

The financial side of the matter could not long be kept out of sight; James suggested that pending the conclusion of the marriage a part of the dowry should be sent in advance. At the same time Ferdinand was asked to help in resisting the claims of rivals to the English throne. Nothing had been done by March 1603 in regard to the marriage, and James now being secure in his possession of England was no longer in the position of a suppliant, but that did not prevent him from demanding as the price of the alliance the sum of 300,000 crowns down. (1)

---

Even this sketch of the foreign policy of the reign helps us to form a better understanding of that policy than that held by some of the standard writers. Some have held that the guiding principle was James' desire to secure the recognition of his claim to the English throne. But against that view it may be urged that such a consideration could have had no influence with the regents, and yet their diplomacy and that of James himself were in general identical, although under the king there is more ingenuity shown; again, before the execution of Mary, the question had not assumed any practical importance: as long as Elizabeth was of marriageable age his claim was of little account. Even in the later years this could not have been the only principle, for

(1) Mackie, *op. cit.* p. 282.

a definite promise would have been of very little practical value to a king whose immediate need was a sufficiency of money to enable him to continue as King of Scotland. In any case foreign intrigues were not the best means to ensure his accession in England, and James, being no fool, knew this. Hill Burton is of the opinion that James' intrigues were due to his fondness for "exhibiting little feats in the practical application of his beloved science of king-craft", so that he might acquire the repute of a politician "so profound as to be inscrutable by ordinary intellects". Again, his policy was "a chronic system of mendacity and deception". (1) We grant the mendacity and the deception, but in view of what has been shown, that money was so essential to him, and that he was sincere in his attempts to obtain it, just as he was entirely indifferent to the means he adopted, it cannot be accepted that he was merely gratifying a desire to prove himself a great diplomat. Andrew Lang, writing of the year 1596, says that his empty treasury caused James to adopt two unusual measures, one being the appointment of the Octavians, and the other his endeavours to raise money from Spain and the Pope. We contend that the latter measure was no unusual one, but as has been shown, it was the one almost constantly adopted for the filling of his treasury. (2) True it is that the English succession bulked

(1) Vol. 5, p. 288.

(2) Lang, Vol. 2, p. 401.



largely in his aspirations, but as an explanation of his foreign policy it is not sufficient. The true key to the involved foreign policy of the whole reign is to be found in the extreme poverty of the Scottish crown; had Elizabeth cared, or had she been able to throw aside her habitual rigid economy, she could have kept him obedient to her will; since she failed to do so he acted in the hope that if in religion he showed a tendency to show favour to Catholicism, and in foreign affairs to be friendly with England's enemies, then the necessary money might be forthcoming from abroad.

When the attempt is made to estimate his success, it has to be admitted that it was not brilliant in its results, although clever in its conception. The reason is not difficult to find; he was trying to do the impossible, and his success depended entirely on the extent to which he could deceive everyone at the same time. As his duplicity was more and more understood as the years went on, his position weakened, and his success, measured in money, became less and less. From Europe he received little more than promises, especially in the later years, and, as Elizabeth was the more constant purchaser, he was frequently forced to play the part of her vassal. As a result he earned for himself much unpopularity at home from those of his subjects who did not realise his difficulties. It is strange, writes Crawford, that a country which had sacrificed so many of her sons, and spilt so much of

her blood, should thus tamely suffer herself to be whipped and lashed, feel no smart, forget the shame, and like a schoolboy kiss the rod and fawn upon the tyrant that corrected her. (1) ~~At the same time, in 1581,~~ In 1581, Randolph appeared before the Estates and told them plainly of Elizabeth's wishes, showing that "the slavish dependance of the four regents had taught the English to use a great deal of freedom with us". (2) Especially was this abject servility seen in the days following the execution of Mary, when people thought nothing of asking James to his face, "What England doth for him, nay what evil do they not? Have they not cut off your mother's head, defaced your title to England, denied you your lands in England, plotted to keep you unmarried, stirring up factions, aiding your outlaws? What is your recompense? Marry, sir, they will give you a poor pension to make you their pensioner to your more disgrace and shame to all princes that know it". Bowes, if he is to be believed, used to speak "plainly and earnestly" to the king and the Privy Council, sat down with them at the council table, took part in the discussions, and practically forced them to do as he wished. (3) Humiliations such as these were the natural result of the way in which he allowed himself to be bought. But it is difficult to see what else James could have done, and in any case too much may be made of this

(1) Crawford, Memoirs, p. 203. (2) Same, p. 368.

(3) Bowes, Despatches, Correspondence, pp. 275, 280, 285.



submission to English dictation. It is wrong to say that "Elizabeth and her ministers managed James as they pleased". (1) On the contrary she could never for any great length of time feel sure of his fidelity. "It is true that she ruled Scotland like a grange under the title of a regent sway", but she "cannot digest a King of Scots to reign in the seat of his own majesty". (2) Masson's judgment is much nearer the truth, "Small as it was, it (the English pension) was an item of much consideration to James' Exchequer, and a bond keeping him steadier to his amity with Elizabeth than he might have been". (3)

- (1) Harris, Historical and Critical Account.
- (2) Hist. MSS., Salisbury, Part 6, p. 371.
- (3) Reg. P. C., Vol. 5, p. 572, note.

### Conclusion.

In conclusion, it may be said that a study of the financial conditions of the reign of James VI provides a means of arriving at a better understanding of the reign, and at a fairer estimate of the man. It helps to explain much that was obscure in the domestic history of the period: the evil results of Mary's misrule and of the civil war that followed it, the weaknesses of the king's character, the unsystematic methods of the administration, the appearance of the quarrel between <sup>Crown</sup>~~Crown~~ and Parliament over questions of supply, are all more clearly understood. Light is cast on the domestic worries of the monarch, ~~and~~ on his marriage and on the weakness that characterised his rule, while the constitutional events of the reign are shown in their proper setting. A knowledge of the financial conditions is important for a proper understanding of the difficult history of the course of the Reformation in Scotland in his time, and for the explanation of his amazingly intricate, and seemingly inconsistent foreign policy.

James has suffered from very harsh criticism, contemporary and modern, and it has been the fashion to represent him as careless and cowardly at home, and as a prince of deceit in foreign diplomacy. "He is a man of small spirit, quite given up to his pleasures and the chase, and allows himself to be swayed by those around him", (1) says a contemporary; but

(1) C. S. P. Vol. 4, No. 611.



a knowledge of his difficulties, which are so largely the result of his impecuniosity, makes us more sympathetic. In the circumstances, he was at the mercy of "those around him", and to take up a strong attitude, to attempt to crush the turbulent barons, to maintain peace and order, was for him an impossibility. His increased strength after 1603 enabled him to prove his willingness and ability to effect a revolution in Scotland in this respect. By Presbyterian writers he has been regarded as a bitter enemy of their faith, but we have seen that his ecclesiastical policy was forced on him by his financial difficulties. Indeed had the Reformation in Scotland been monarchical as in England, instead of baronial, the whole of the domestic history of the reign would have been very different.

In his foreign policy he has always been regarded as an unprincipled deceiver, but he erred in a goodly company that included Elizabeth, Philip and the Pope himself, and in his case we believe that, but for his poverty, much of his double dealing would have been unnecessary. Criticisms levelled against him for his servility to England, too, have less weight when his difficulties are better understood; a more courageous assertion of Scottish independence would have been disastrous, and would have entailed a more galling submission to a European master. His position was indeed pitiable. He cannot be admired for the success of his statesmanship but

he should be pitied for his misfortunes, and pardoned for his mistakes.

---